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A FARMER'S HOME

# WORKING WOMEN OF JAPAN

BY

SIDNEY L. GULICK

Twenty-five years a missionary in Japan, Professor in Doshisha University, Late Lecturer in the Imperial University of Kyoto

Author of

*Growth of the Kingdom of God; Evolution of the Japanese; The White Peril in the Far East; The American Japanese Problem; The Fight for Peace*

1915

Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada

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in appreciation of more than a decade
of untiring service
for the
Working Women of Japan

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# PREFACE

JAPAN is rapidly swinging into the current of an industrial civilization imported from the West. How is this movement modifying her ancient civilization? And, especially, what effect is it having on her homes and on the character of her manhood and womanhood? These are questions of profound interest to students of national and social evolution.

While many works on Japan consider these questions more or less fully, they do so almost exclusively from the standpoint of the effect on men. So far as is known, no work studies the problem from the standpoint of the effect on women, who, it may be incidentally remarked, constitute one half of the population.

One book, indeed, that by Miss Alice M. Bacon, on *Japanese Girls and Women,* describes the homes, lives, and characteristics

of Japanese women. This important work should not be overlooked by any who wish to know Japan thoroughly. Yet Miss Bacon's study is largely confined to the higher and upper middle classes, who, though important, constitute but one section of the women of Japan. To understand Japan it is also needful to know the lives and characteristics of the working classes. Especially important in the eyes of those who study social development is the transformation that is taking place in the Japanese home because of the influx of Occidental industrialism.

The purpose of this book is to give some information as to conditions prevailing among working women, which conditions have called for the establishment of institutions whose specific aim is the amelioration of the industrial and moral situation. Two classes of workers have not been considered—school-teachers and nurses.

The reader will naturally ask what the native religions have done to help women meet the modern situation. The answer

is short; practically nothing. They are seriously belated in every respect. For ages the native religions have served by doctrine and practise to hold women down rather than to elevate them. The doctrine of the "triple obedience" to father, to husband, and when old to son, has had wide-reaching and disastrous consequences. It has even been utilized for the support of the brothel system. Popular Buddhism, especially during the feudal era, has emphasized the inherent sinfulness of woman; some have even taught that her lightest sins are worse than the heaviest sins of man. The brothel system flourishes in certain districts where Buddhism is most strongly entrenched. Brothels abound in the immediate vicinity of famous and popular temples. I have yet to hear of a Buddhist anti-brothel movement or a Buddhist rescue home for prostitutes. Japanese philanthropy, under the impulse of Buddhism, did indeed start early and attain striking development at the hands of Imperial and princely personages. Men and women of lowly origin

also attained high rank in the annals of Buddhist philanthropy. With the decay of Buddhism in recent centuries, however, little philanthropic activity has survived. With the revival of Buddhism Buddhists have again undertaken philanthropic work; they have established orphan asylums, schools, ex-convict homes, and various benevolent enterprises for the poor, the old, and invalids; but not yet do they seem to appreciate the moral and industrial situation, or undertake anything commensurate with their numbers and resources. The conception of private enterprise for the amelioration of industrial difficulties and moral need is still the almost exclusive possession of Christians.

The closing chapter describes one institution in which the Christian ideal is applied to the moral and industrial situation in one small town. It serves as an illustration of what is being done by Christians in other places and along many other lines as well. Christianity is being accepted in Japan, not so much because of its doctrine,

as because of its practical methods of inspiring and uplifting manhood and womanhood. While the purpose of this book is, as stated, to describe the industrial condition and the characteristics of Japanese working women, back of this purpose is the desire to show how the Christian gospel, when concretely expressed, takes hold of Japanese working women in exactly these conditions and becomes to them "the power of God unto salvation."

The problems of life are substantially the same the world around, for human nature is one; and the heart with its needs, desires, temptations, defeats, and victories is essentially the same, East or West. The problems created by industrialism do not differ, whether in Germany, England, and America or in Japan and China. And their fundamental solution likewise is the same.

Let not the reader assume that the discussions of this volume give adequate acquaintance with the working women of Japan. It deals with only a few specific

classes and inadequately even with them. A more comprehensive treatment would doubtless be enlightening. Limitations, however, of time and space forbid a more adequate discussion.

And let the reader be wary of generalizing certain criticisms herein made and applying them universally to all classes of women. Many years of life in Japan have led the writer to a high estimation of the character as well as the culture of Japanese women.

Especial thanks are due to Colonel Yamamuro for valued criticisms and suggestions in the preparation of this work. The responsibility, however, for its statements rests upon the writer. The limitations of this book none can feel more than he.

# CHAPTER I

## SOCIAL CLASSES IN JAPAN, OLD AND NEW

IN old Japan, next to the Imperial family and court nobles, came the feudal lords (*Daimio*), upheld by the warrior class (*Samurai*), below whom in turn were ranked the three chief working classes,—farmers, artizans, and tradesmen. These three classes produced and distributed the nation's wealth and paid taxes to their respective feudal lords by whom the warriors were supported. Below all were day laborers and palanquin bearers,—in those days a large and important though a despised class, for they lived entirely by bare, brute strength, lacking all special skill. Still lower were the *eta* or pariah class, excluded from towns and villages, except when they entered to do the foulest work, such as digging the graves of criminals and the slaughtering of animals,

and curing their skins. And lowest of all were *hi-nin,* literally translated "non-humans." These were beggars and criminals, who would not or could not work. The name, popularly given, well indicates how they were regarded.

With the fall of the feudal system, in the early seventies, society was reorganized. Those above the Samurai were divided in 1886 into five grades, not counting the Imperial princes, namely: prince, marquis, count, viscount, and baron. These constitute to-day the hereditary peers of Japan, and possess considerable wealth and, of course, overwhelming prestige.

They numbered, in 1903, 1,784 families. Besides the 1,784 heads of these families, there were 1,786 male and 2,485 female members of these families of rank. The number of these peers is constantly being increased by Imperial favor, the conferring of rank being the customary method of rewarding distinguished service. According to the *Japan Year Book* for 1914, the number of

peers in 1911 was 919, there being 17 princes, 37 marquises, 101 counts, 378 viscounts, and 386 barons. Promotion from one rank to another causes constant change in the numbers of the various ranks.

The Samurai, deprived of their swords and military privileges, were given the name *shizoku* (Samurai families) and were paid off in lump sums, thereafter being thrown on their own resources. There are 439,154 shizoku families, numbering altogether 2,169,018 individuals. The remaining classes were designated as *heimin* (common people). Statistics show that they number 8,471,610 families, totaling 44,558,025 individuals. The eta were elevated, hence popularly called *shin-heimin* (new common people) and allowed to live anywhere and take up any desirable calling. The hi-nin also were classed along with the rest of humankind. As a matter of fact, the eta and hi-nin were but a small fringe of the whole population, the descendants of the former being now estimated at something less than one million,

and those of the latter amounting to about 35,000.

With the national reorganization it was inevitable that the new executive offices from the highest to the lowest should be given to men of experience. At first, therefore, the reorganization amounted to little more than a great shuffle of names and titles. Peers took the highest governmental positions, while Samurai and their sons as a rule filled the lower posts. Many Samurai, however, received no appointments and had to go to work. In time, as education has progressed, sons of farmers and merchants have become qualified and have been appointed to government offices. The new departments, such as the educational, the postal and telegraph offices, the railroads, and especially the army and navy, call for large numbers of efficient men. These posts are filled almost entirely on the basis of fitness. While ancestry is not entirely ignored in the making of appointments, nevertheless old class distinctions are gradually being obliterated.

The fortunes of the women have naturally followed those of the men. All families that lost their hereditary income had to go to work; this was true chiefly of the Samurai. Where the men were fortunate, the women could maintain the old customs, limiting themselves to their familiar domestic work, with a servant or two to help, but tens of thousands of Samurai families found themselves reduced to the direst poverty; women having generations of genteel ancestry were forced to enter the ranks of the workers.

Let us define what we mean by a working woman. Women whose husbands or parents provide the support of the family are not to be included in this term. These women may, and indeed doubtless do, labor abundantly and fruitfully in the home; their time is fully occupied. Probably no working women toil more diligently or for longer hours than do these wives and mothers in hundreds of thousands of homes, in most of which there are no servants. All the cooking, sewing, and housecleaning is done

by them, so that they are indeed workers. But they are not "working women." They are the true gentlewomen of Japan, whose culture, graces, and charms are not easily described.

By "working women" we mean only those women who, in addition to the regular duties of the home, must share in the labor of earning the daily bread. In Japan the number of such is exceptionally large, if compared with that of some countries of the West. They may be divided into eleven classes, according to the nature of their occupations, namely: school-teachers, nurses, clerks and office girls, farmers, home industrial workers, factory hands, domestics, baby-tenders, hotel and tea-house girls, geisha, and prostitutes. Omitting the teachers and nurses, these are the classes whose conditions, numbers, education, and character we are now to study. Taken as a whole we do not hesitate to say that the working women of Japan, while probably lower in point of moral and physical energy and personal in-

itiative than corresponding classes of the West, are not inferior to them in point of personal culture. And if civilization is defined, as it should be, in terms of personal culture rather than in those of mechanical contrivances and improvements, then Japan will surely take her place among the highly civilized nations of the world.

## CHAPTER II

### FARMERS' WIVES AND DAUGHTERS

JAPAN has three leading wealth-earning occupations: agriculture, sericulture, and factory work. In each of these women take an important part. In the cultivation of the soil farmers' wives and daughters share equally with men the toil of planting and reaping the crops. For instance, in the cultivation of rice, the most important and the hardest work of the farmer, it is often the women who plant it spear by spear in regular rows, and it is they who "puddle" the paddy-fields with their hands four or five times in the course of the season. In some districts, however, men and women do this work together. The toil and the weariness involved cannot be appreciated by one who has not actually shared it. Fancy, if you can, the fatigue of standing more than ankle

deep in mud, stooping all day long as you set out the tiny rice plants in regular lines! And at short intervals of a few days each you must repeatedly puddle the whole paddy-field: that is, stir up the mud with your hands in order to destroy the sprouting weeds and prevent the soil from caking and hardening around the tender rice roots, preventing their best growth. And remember that you must do all this regardless of the broiling summer sun, or the pelting rain, for the planting must be done at exactly the right time, and the successive puddlings must follow in due order. So severe is the strain that, after the planting and each puddling, the whole village takes a rest. My gardener, an ex-farmer, speaking of those summer days of toil in the rice-fields, expatiates on the extreme fatigue and the joy of the rest days, and as women take the brunt of the stooping-work, theirs is the lion's share of the weariness. He says that, during the rice-planting season, the women are so important that those days are called the "women's daimio

days," and adds that we must not forget how during that time the regular work of the women must also go on, for they must cook the food and care for the children. For this, indeed, young girls and grandmothers are pressed into service as far as possible, but the responsibility and care rest nevertheless on the wives and mothers.

Also in the harvesting and threshing of the rice, barley, wheat, and millet, women take an important part. But it is needless to enter into details. Enough to say that, in general farming, women share with husbands and brothers the heavy toil and fatigue of agriculture. It should be added that this is not because men shirk heavy work, but only because Japanese agriculture is so largely done by hand that every possible worker is pressed into service. As a fact, men do the heaviest part of the work, preparing the soil for the successive crops and carrying the heavy loads.

So varied are the modes of agriculture in different parts of Japan that general state-

ments are dangerous, but I know that in some districts the weariness and drudgery of rice-planting and puddling are relieved by the singing or chanting of old folk-songs. The chorus leader intones a descriptive phrase, oftentimes improvising his own story, and is answered with a refrain from a dozen or a score of women. A story slowly evolves as the hours pass, and thus the work is lightened and the time beguiled.

In spite of fatigue, rice-planting has its charm for those who have been reared in farmers' homes. It is a time of hope, of social intercourse, of rest days and festivals, so that even the drudgery of the farmer has its compensations. Miss Denton, of the Doshisha Girls' School, says it is interesting to note how country girls get restless at rice-planting time, and for one reason or another usually succeed in getting excused from school work, to be off to the homes and share in the toils and joys of the season.

Tea-picking is probably the pleasantest form of toil undertaken by farmers' wives

and daughters. The labor comes in the spring and early summer, when the temperature is delightful. It gives opportunity for social intercourse that is highly appreciated. Rice-planting and tea-picking constitute the two extremes of laborious and delightful toil engaged in by Japan's agricultural women.

How many are the women engaged in agriculture? The *Japan Year Book* for 1914 says that in 1912 there were 5,438,051 farming families, constituting about 58 per cent. of the entire nation. According to the *Résumé Statistique* for 1914 the total number of females in Japan proper, in 1908, was 24,542,383. Omitting those under fifteen years of age, 8,364,000, and those over sixty years of age, 2,216,000, we have 13,962,000 as the number of able-bodied women, of whom 58 per cent., or 8,077,000, are the farmers' wives and daughters.

In regard to their education it may be said that until the most recent times they have had practically none. In recent decades, however, farmers' children have begun to go

to school. Until 1908 the elementary course (compulsory) covered four years, but the results were so poor that the period has now been extended to six. Four years' schooling does not give ability to read easily even a simple daily paper, much less an ordinary book. Our cook, an intelligent and able farming woman, when she came to us twelve years ago, could not read even the simplest Japanese characters, and thinks that at present relatively few farmers' wives have enough education to read papers or write letters. Whether or not six years' schooling will give this ability remains to be seen. It is safe to say that to-day Japanese adult farming women, as a whole, lack book education and have received little, if any, systematic training. They are accordingly largely controlled by tradition, and it goes without saying that their level of mental, moral, and spiritual life is low. The Shinto and Buddhist religions, as they exist among the farmers, are largely lacking in ethical content; they are rituals rather for burying the dead

and through the use of charms and magic rites they promise future happiness and present, temporal blessings. Priests, as a rule, do not seek to cultivate the minds of the people, to strengthen their wills for moral life, or to elevate their personalities.

Yet it must not be inferred that farming women are without mental ability or common sense. They are indeed not inferior to the men with whom they share the burdens and toil of life. As a rule they are a sturdy, intelligent, self-respecting folk, having ideals of conduct which include cleanliness, gentleness, and politeness, and in comparison with the peasant classes of Europe are much to be commended. The women not seldom appear to better advantage than their husbands in point of intelligence and common sense, which I have thought might be due to the greater variety of their daily occupation.

In her excellent work on *Japanese Girls and Women* Miss Bacon writing of this class says: "There seems no doubt at all that

among the peasantry of Japan one finds the women who have the most freedom and independence. Among this class, all through the country, the women, though hard-worked and possessing few comforts, lead lives of intelligent, independent labor, and have in the family positions as respected and honored as those held by women in America. Their lives are fuller and happier than those of the women of the higher classes, for they are themselves breadwinners, contributing an important part of the family revenue, and are obeyed and respected accordingly. The Japanese lady, at her marriage, lays aside her independent existence to become the subordinate and servant of her husband and parents-in-law, and her face, as the years go by, shows how much she has given up, how completely she has sacrificed herself to those about her. The Japanese peasant woman, when she marries, works side by side with her husband, finds life full of interest outside of the simple household work, and, as the years go by, her face shows more

individuality, more pleasure in life, less suffering and disappointment than that of her wealthier and less hard-working sister." [1]

The home of the average tenant farmer is a small, single-storied, thatch-roofed building, having usually two or three small rooms separated by sliding paper screens, and a kitchen with earthen floor. The smoke escapes as it can, passing through the roof or pervading the whole house. No privacy of any kind is possible, nor is any need of it felt. The house is free of furniture, save for one or two chests of drawers. A closet or two affords a place for the *futon* (bedding) by day, and for the little extra clothing. Of course no books are found in such homes. The main room often has a board floor, with a fire box in the center, over which is a kettle suspended from the roof. Here the family eat, and friends gather to chat after the day's work is over. The food is of the poorest grade in the empire, though usually adequate in amount. Of course

[1] Pp. 260, 261.

SEPARATING THE WHEAT HEADS FROM THE STRAW

AT THE LOOM

there are well-to-do farmers, not a few, who own their farms, employ fellow farmers, and cultivate large areas. Their homes are larger and better, but still in arrangement and structure they are practically the same. Their sons attend the middle schools and books and the daily paper are familiar objects.

The economic condition of the farming class may be judged from the fact that the land cultivated by each family averages three and one-third acres, which must provide food and clothing for five or six persons. The great majority of farmers live in little, compact villages, having populations ranging from 500 to 5,000. There are 12,706 villages under 5,000, and only 1,311 villages, towns, and cities over 5,000. These facts suggest the nature of the social conditions of the farming population. They live under the severest limitations of every kind, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. Yet during the recent era of Meiji (enlightened rule), from 1868 to 1912, the economic condition of the agricultural classes made

great improvement. My gardener, a man of sixty, who remembers Japan before the reformation, 1868, says that farmers now live in luxury. The taxes they pay to-day are slight compared with what was required of them in former times, when, in his section, farmers had to give to their Daimio about five twelfths of the rice crop, while taxes to-day require but one fifth or less. He adds that families owning three and one third acres of land are well-to-do, seeing many families have to make their entire living from only one acre!

Of course, farmers, without education or social demands, require little beyond the simplest food and shelter. The clothing needed by their families is the cheapest cotton, with cotton wadding added in the winter for warmth. The heat of the summer renders much clothing a burden. A farmer is adequately dressed for the field or his own home if he has on his loin-cloth. His wife or grown-up daughter, when in the house with only the immediate members of the fam-

ily or most intimate acquaintances present, is satisfied with the *koshimaki*—a strip of cloth some two feet wide tied around the waist and covering the lower part of the body. But on the street both men and women conform to the national customs and wear the kimono.

The Japanese household and bathing customs have served to prevent the development of that particular type of modesty characteristic of Western lands. It is difficult for Occidentals to understand this feature of Japanese civilization, but such an understanding is essential if one would do justice to the moral life of this people. We may not apply to them Occidental standards in matters of modesty or dress. They have standards of their own, to understand and appreciate which requires no little study.

At this point, I venture a second quotation from Miss Bacon, for she has studied carefully this subject, which all foreigners seeking to estimate the nature of Japanese civilization and moral character should not

fail to master. "As one travels," she writes, "through rural Japan in summer, and sees the half-naked men, women, and children that pour out from every village on one's route, surrounding the *kuruma* (wheeled vehicle) at every stopping place, one sometimes wonders whether there is in the country any real civilization, whether these half-naked people are not more savage than civilized. But when one finds everywhere good hotels, scrupulous cleanliness in all the appointments of toilet and table, polite and careful servants, honest and willing performance of labor bargained for, together with the gentlest and pleasantest of manners, one is forced to reconsider the judgment formed only upon one peculiarity of the national life, and to conclude that there is certainly a high type of civilization in Japan, though differing in many particulars from our own. A careful study of Japanese ideas of decency, and frequent conversation with refined and intelligent Japanese ladies upon this subject, has led me to the following conclusion.

According to the Japanese standard, any exposure of the person that is merely incidental to health, cleanliness, or convenience in doing necessary work is perfectly modest and allowable; but an exposure, no matter how slight, that is simply for show, is in the highest degree indelicate. In illustration of the first part of this conclusion, I would refer to the open bath-houses, the naked laborers, the exposure of the lower limbs in wet weather by the turning up of the kimono, the entirely nude condition of the country children in summer, and the very slight clothing that some adults regard as necessary about the house or in the country during the hot season. In illustration of the last point, I would mention the horror with which many Japanese ladies regard that style of foreign dress which, while covering the figure completely, reveals every detail of the form above the waist, and, as we say, shows off to advantage a pretty figure. To the Japanese mind, it is immodest to want to show off a pretty figure. As for the ball-

room costumes, where neck and arms are frequently exposed to the gaze of multitudes, the Japanese woman who would with entire composure take her bath in the presence of others, would be in an agony of shame at the thought of appearing in public in a costume so indecent as that worn by many respectable American and European women." [1]

This completes our study of the homes and characteristics of five eighths of Japan. Here the brawn of the nation is reared. Hence come the sturdy, docile, patient, and courageous soldiers. Here are raised boys and girls by the hundreds of thousands who must at an early age begin to earn a living. This is the hunting-ground of those who seek for builders of railroads, factory hands, domestics, hotel girls, baby-tenders, and occasionally geishas, concubines, and prostitutes. Considering the severe economic conditions under which Japan's agricultural classes live, who can fail to admire their courage and grit, their personal culture, their even tem-

[1] *Japanese Girls and Women*, 257-260.

per and cheerful faces, their innate habits of courtesy and good breeding, their mutual patience and forbearance, and their simple artistic tastes and pleasures! Do they not compare well with the peasant classes of any other nation?

# CHAPTER III

## DOMESTIC INDUSTRIES IN FARMING FAMILIES

BEFORE passing on to study the various classes of workers constantly recruited in no small numbers from the homes of farmers, we should first consider the high development of industrial occupations within these homes themselves. To appreciate both the opportunity and the need for this, we turn to the official statistics of marriage and education. Until 1908 compulsory education, as has been already stated, covered four years from the age of six to ten. According to governmental statistics (1912) 98.8 per cent. of the boys and 97.5 per cent. of the girls were actually fulfilling the requirement. This percentage seems high to American statistical students, but investigations show that, while Japanese rules for the attendance of pupils and methods of counting the

same differ in some respects from those that prevail in the United States and Canada, yet, as a matter of fact, in school attendance Japan compares well with other lands. It should be remembered, however, that the nature of the Japanese written language is such that even six years of elementary education is probably not equal to four years of similar schooling in Western lands. American children, at the close of their elementary education, possess a mastery of the tools of civilization and a degree of general intelligence considerably in advance of Japanese children who have enjoyed the same number of years of school life. As we have already seen, this amount of compulsory education is insufficient to give children ability to read and write with freedom.

The question for us however is as to the number of girls above school age and still unmarried who, because of family poverty, must find some form of wage-earning occupation. Turning to the vital statistics provided by the government (1914), we find

that in 1908 there were 2,496,142 girls between ten and fifteen years of age, and 2,180,408 young women between fifteen and twenty years of age. But how many of these are married? Again relying on government statistics for the same year, we learn that only 199 girls under fifteen had been married, whereas 193,978 had married under twenty years of age. In view of the fact that 709,021 marriages took place between twenty and twenty-five years of age, it is altogether probable that, of those married under twenty, a large majority were married in their nineteenth year. Remembering that many do not marry until the twenty-third or twenty-fourth year, we can confidently assert that there are over 4,000,000 unmarried girls and young women between the ages of ten and twenty-five; and, as 58 per cent. belong to the farming class, we have in the vicinity of 3,000,000 girls who belong to families of such economic state that they, no less than the boys, must contrive in some way to earn a share at least of their own living. Girls of

fifteen and upwards in farmers' families help their fathers in the lighter forms of agriculture, planting the rice, as we have seen, and reaping and threshing the crops. But the small acreage to each family barely provides work enough for the man, much less for the half-grown boys and girls, hence the need of finding something besides the agricultural work for the growing family. The younger children (under fifteen) are pressed into lighter farming, and such household duties as are within their strength and ability, as cooking and caring for the still younger children; while the older children and the mother help the father, or take up some domestic industry, such as the rearing of silkworms, reeling of silk, spinning of thread, and weaving of silk and cotton fabrics, or similar work which can be easily and profitably done in the house in spare hours. Hence has come the widespread practise of household industries, by which the female members supplement the family income. There were, in 1907, 1,628,000 members of farm-

ing families who were earning a part of their living in this way. This condition has prevailed for many generations, and is the secret of the wonderful development of the arts and home industries in Japan.

From of old Japan's industrial system, like that of other lands, has been domestic—carried on in the house. There have been families and gilds which have made their entire livelihood by these manual industries. There have also been hundreds of thousands of farming families which have supplemented their meager income from their farms by taking up some of these domestic industries, and those who have displayed or developed special aptitude for such work have naturally drifted into this wholly industrial life. This has doubtless been the origin of industrial families and gilds. But the point to be especially noted is that this wide development of domestic industries is due to the skill and diligence of Japan's working *women.* Japanese men have produced the food by which the nation has been fed; her

A FAMILY AT WORK IN A RICE-FIELD
TRANSPLANTING YOUNG RICE PLANTS

women have produced industries by which the nation has been clothed, as indeed is the case of all great civilized nations. Their long-continued drill, from generation to generation, in home industrial occupations, has produced a high degree of manual dexterity; the eye and hand instinctively move accurately and rapidly in the work, and the result is that Japan's leading industries to this day are dependent on female labor. "Sericulture, silk-reeling, cotton spinning, *habutae* (a particular variety of silk fabric), and other woven goods, tea-picking, straw and chip braids, etc., are practically dependent on female labor," says the *Japanese Year Book* for 1910. "But an industry depending on female labor has this peculiarity, namely: it is not compatible with the factory system, but thrives best on the domestic plan. Generally speaking it is in industries which admit of being carried on independently at separate homes by housewives and mothers that skilled female labor is seen to the best advantage. As operatives of family industries

Japanese women show an efficiency rarely reached by their foreign sisters." But in this connection we may remind ourselves of the great skill and industry of our grandmothers and preceding generations of women, who lived before the great factory system made their home industrial occupations unnecessary. Japan is merely several decades behind Western lands in her industrial development.

We are to understand, then, that a large portion of these 3,000,000 unmarried Japanese women and girls are engaged more or less continuously in some sort of industrial work, either in their own homes or in small groups in their immediate vicinity. The introduction into Japan of Occidental mechanical civilization, with its great machinery run by steam power, and the great factory system, taking girls and young women away from their home industries, home restraints, and home training, is producing mighty changes in Japan's traditional civilization. The real consequences of these new

modes of life and labor are still little appreciated. There is taking place a rapid readjustment of population, which indeed is easily seen, but the disastrous results to the mental, moral, and religious life of the people, even to the maintenance of the ideals and standards that controlled the older arts and industries, are yet little realized, for the great changes have only begun within the past two decades. A generation or two must pass before we can see clearly what it all really means. Meanwhile it is for those who foresee coming evils to sound aloud the call, and, as prophets, to do that which in them lies to meet the threatened disasters, and turn new conditions into blessings. Japan has the advantage of a century of European experience from which to learn wisdom. It is to be hoped that she will avoid many of the perils and evils into which the West has fallen, but the signs of the times are not altogether reassuring. There are, as we shall see later on, ominous clouds on Japan's industrial horizon.

## CHAPTER IV

### SILK WORKERS

THE chief wealth-earning domestic industry carried on by farmers' wives and daughters is the rearing of silkworms and the reeling, spinning, and weaving of the silk. Japan supplies about 28 per cent. of the total silk of the world and 60 per cent. of that used in the United States. The value of the silk exported in 1913 was $63,000,000. Women are the chief workers, contributing 90 per cent. of the labor. Here again the toil is taxing beyond belief.

The brunt of the work consists first in filling the mouths of the worms, which must be fed at regular intervals night and day for about three weeks, during the last few days of which they eat continuously and voraciously. It has been found that the rearing of worms can best be done only on a

SPINNING COTTON THREAD FOR WEAVING
AT WORK IN A KITCHEN

small scale, where minute attention can be given to each tray, almost to each worm. This means that worms are reared in the homes of the people, rather than in large establishments. During the silkworm season everything else must give way; the house is filled with trays of ravenous worms; rest, recreation, and sleep, for old and young alike, are neglected in order that the precious worms may get their fill. Men and boys bring in the mulberry leaves from the hills and fields, while women and girls strip the branches, chop the leaves and feed them to the magic creatures that transform worthless green leaves into costly silk. The leaves must not be damp, nor old, and every condition of weather and temperature must be watched with the closest care. Otherwise there is loss. This heavy work comes twice each year, in some places three times. That is to say, there are two or three crops of silkworms.

Then, after the cocoons have been formed, comes the reeling off of the silk, as much

as possible before the sleeping grub wakens and eats its way out, destroying the silk it has spun for its nest. So again there is pressure, and again women do the work—I never heard of a man reeling silk. It takes the deft hand and quick eye of a girl to catch the thread in the boiling water, connect it with the wheel, and unroll without breaking the almost invisible thread so wonderfully wound up by the worm. This work is often done in the homes, but increasingly now, because more profitably, in factories where the girls can be closely watched by inspectors and paid according to the skill and the amount of their work.

The number of families engaged exclusively in raising silk in the nine principal districts is reported (1911) at 370,332. In addition however there are many tens of thousands of families which make this only a secondary business. Many merely raise the worms, selling the cocoons to the factories, and in such cases the work and strain are over in a few weeks. The value of the

cocoons raised in 1911 was estimated at $89,001,988, which gives some idea of the great importance of this industry to the families engaged in it. But it must be remembered that the industry demands heavy expense and the most taxing of toil while it lasts.

As this industry is carried on chiefly in the homes, the personal conditions of the workers are relatively favorable, as favorable as those of the homes. This requires therefore no special consideration.

## CHAPTER V

### WIVES AND DAUGHTERS OF ARTIZANS AND MERCHANTS

IN old Japan, among the workers the highest rank was held by farmers, next by artizans, and last came the merchants, for they were regarded as resorting to means somewhat degrading for making their living. In fact they were not producers of positive wealth, but lived by cunning wit on what others had made.

Artizans, such as carpenters, masons, and professional weavers, as well as merchants, naturally live in towns and cities. The first work of the wife is of course in the home, but when the husband's work is of such a nature that it is possible the wife naturally helps him. Merchants' wives and daughters, for instance, keep the shops while the husbands peddle the goods or secure fresh supplies. Weavers' wives and daughters aid

directly, the whole family sharing in the work and acquiring skill. Carpentry and masonry however are trades in which women take no part, so women of these classes also seek some suitable domestic industry. In the smaller towns especially, in recent years, rearing of silkworms is a common occupation for all classes of moderate means, but in the cities it is impossible to secure the necessary mulberry leaves, so straw braiding, the making of fans, embroidery, and similar occupations are here sought; and there are produced the thousand and one articles used by the middle and wealthy classes and for export. As a means of increasing the income the wives of artizans often open their front rooms as shops and carry on a small retail business.

In times of prosperity these classes flourish and grow luxurious, but hard times occasionally come, when they are reduced to dire poverty and even to the verge of starvation; for, living away from the land, they are more dependent than farmers on the

continuous success of their labors and secondary industries.

The school education of the women of these classes is in general the same as that of the farming class. But inasmuch as they live, for the most part, in the larger villages, towns, and cities, they enjoy many advantages over their farming sisters. Along with their husbands they have more need of ability to read and write, and, becoming quick-witted through the stimulus of city life, they learn more easily. In recent decades, especially the last, many of their children, naturally those of the more successful families, are pressing up into the higher schools of learning. As a body, therefore, from the standpoint of mere intellect and wit, this class surpasses the farming class. From the standpoint however of moral character, of conjugal fidelity, of industry, and of trustworthiness in all relations the farming class, along with the shizoku, surpasses all others, and probably even the peers themselves. But in these higher classes we must distinguish

between the men and the women; for while the wives are, as a rule, beyond praise in the matter of conjugal fidelity, the same may not be said of the husbands.

Among the many classes of working women named on a previous page are the "clerks." This is a new feature of Japanese life worthy of note, although the class is still small. Under this name we include ticket sellers in railway stations, assistant barbers, and saleswomen and shopgirls. Members of this class have of course enjoyed a relatively large amount of education, and are therefore above the average in general intelligence and ability. These girls are recruited from the families of city artizans and merchants.

The descendants of palanquin bearers, day laborers, eta, and hi-nin form to-day the lowest stratum of society, dwelling on the outskirts of large cities, in wretchedness, filth, and poverty, getting their living from day to day and breeding criminals, geisha, and prostitutes. The stone-breakers, gravel gatherers, coolies, and most irregular of city

day laborers come from this class. Many of these men have illustrious pedigrees. Some fell to this estate through wanton lust and reckless expenditure of inherited wealth; some are descendants of disinherited sons; the ancestors of some have met political reverses and found refuge and safety only among the "non-humans," where they could live unrecognized and unknown. Thus all grades of blood course through the veins of this, the lowest class in Japan. The wives and daughters of these men share their fate and fortune, living from hand to mouth. Their life is so low and uncertain that it is absurd to speak of secondary occupations—they lack even a primary occupation; and their homes, which constitute the slums of the cities, are no places in which to carry on any domestic industry.

With the coming to Japan however of modern industrialism and the building of large factories in or near the cities, the wives and daughters of this class have opportunity for regular work, earning enough and more

than enough to support themselves while actually at work. But when attacked by laziness, fickleness, or disease, they easily slump back into the same economic pit. From this lowest class comes one of the serious dangers threatening the better life of modern Japan. The insufficiency of these laborers, their unreliable character, and the inferior quality of their work, have forced the factories to search elsewhere for hands. These they have found in the relatively workless, but industrious and comparatively moral farming class. These farmers' girls have been brought to the cities and thrown into intimate relations with the lowest, most dissolute, despised, and really despicable classes, and the results have naturally been disastrous in many ways, as we shall see in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER VI

### *KOMORI* (BABY-TENDERS)

THE great poverty of the majority of the people renders necessary, as already noted, not only the utmost economy in the home, but also a high degree of industry, and the beginning of productive labor at an early age. As soon as the child has completed the elementary education, and, in cases of exceptional poverty, even before that, he or she must begin to do something of value and earn a living, at least in part. In the case of farming families, younger children care for the youngest and share in the household duties, thus relieving the mother and elder children, enabling them to aid the husband and father in the field. But the positive agricultural or industrial work which girls of from ten to fifteen can do is insignificant, yet they eat as much as a grown

person, and hence comes the search for suitable openings for such workers. This is found for many of the younger girls in the homes of the middle and upper classes, where they go as *komori* (baby-tenders).

Girls even as young as ten leave their homes and go out to service. They receive food and lodging, in some cases a garment in summer and one in winter, and sometimes in addition a small cash stipend. A komori thus is usually the daughter of a poor family who goes into a well-to-do family to aid the mother in the care of her infant. Her chief duty is to carry the infant, sleeping or waking, on her back for many consecutive hours during the day. In addition to this she aids a little in the household work, washing dishes and cleaning the house, her hours of service being unlimited. In some families she may be called on at any hour of the night to carry the baby, if it is restless or fretful and needs to be "jiggled" to sleep! A komori is employed by the year, but usually without specific contract, her

parents sometimes receiving a few yen [1] when she enters upon service. Her time is entirely at the disposal of her mistress and she goes to no school, receives no regular instruction, and no training other than that which comes incidentally from association with members of the family. Long hours each day are spent on the street with an infant on her back, playing hop-scotch and other games with other komori.

In a few places efforts are being made, I am told, to provide these baby-tenders with educational advantages, but the movement is as yet small. Buddhists are said to be particularly active in this matter.

A blind man in Matsuyama, a Christian of my acquaintance, put out one of his daughters to service as a komori. After two years of such life, poverty-stricken though the family was, he brought her home again, for the child of fourteen, so far from learning anything good, was learning many things bad on the street, and was being dwarfed

[1] A yen has the value of forty-nine cents.

CARRYING FAGOTS

BABY-TENDERS

in mind by the long hours when she was wholly without mental stimulus. The life of a komori will of course vary much with the nature of the family by which she is employed, but at best the service cannot fail to stunt the growth of both body and mind.

I heard not long since of a boy who became a komori. His father had died a drunkard, leaving the family ruined financially. The mother and children were accordingly distributed among the creditors to work off his debts. The little boy of eight went with his mother, and, so long as she lived—some three years—life was endurable for him, but after her death he was made increasingly miserable. Long hours by day and many interrupted nights, unkind words, and unutterable loneliness vexed his orphaned spirit, until he could endure it no longer, and planned to run away. The stern master however discovered him doing up his bundle, and, to prevent his escape, ordered his few possessions, even his clothing, to be taken away. In spite of this he

slipped out one night in the darkness and hid in a barn in a neighboring village until morning, when he was taken pity on by some children who shared a kimono or two with him, and so he got away. With increasing years he led a wild, roving life; at eighteen he became a murderer and was imprisoned for life, escaping the death penalty on account of being a minor. In prison he first heard the Christian gospel of God's forgiving love, of peace and hope and joy. This "good news" he accepted, and learned to read, that he might read the New Testament, which he committed to memory. Upon the death of the Empress Dowager, in 1896, his penalty, with that of many other prisoners, was remitted, and now for fourteen years he has been living a life remarkably fruitful in Christian service.

But, to return to our subject, we note that not all komori are children. Superannuated old women who have neither strength nor brains for anything else also act in this capacity, their conditions of service and

wages being the same as those of girls. I have tried to get some idea as to the number of komori in Japan, but have been able to find no statistics. One gentleman assures me that at least one family in five of the middle and upper classes employs a komori. As the number of families in Japan, exclusive of farmers, is 3,981,940 (1912), this would make about 796,000 komori; but many well-to-do farming families also employ komori, so the total number in Japan would be not far from 1,000,000. A lady however assures me that this estimate is altogether too high, and thinks that not more than one family in twenty has the means to employ a komori. If this is true, then the number is in the vicinity of 250,000. In either case, the system and its nature are clear, and the numbers of children sent out to service at a tender age is not inconsiderable. The attention of educators and parents is being directed to the dangers to infants of this komori system, to say nothing of the harm it does to the girls themselves.

## CHAPTER VII

### HOUSEHOLD DOMESTICS

BY the time a girl is fifteen or sixteen she is regarded as sufficiently large, strong, and mature to enter on more responsible work. Among the several fields open to her is that of *gejo,* or domestic service, of which we may distinguish two varieties: those who serve in private families and those who become maids in hotels and tea-houses. A komori may gradually work into the position of a domestic; indeed, in the majority of homes a komori not only tends the baby but aids the mother in her household work. It is only in the homes of the well-to-do that both gejo and komori are to be found. The work of a gejo consists in taking the brunt of the cooking, housecleaning, and washing, serving from daybreak, that is, from five or six in the morning, till ten or eleven

at night. Her status is somewhat better than that of the komori. Her hours of service however are long and taxing. Her time for rest is after the family has retired for the night and before they rise in the morning. Frequently her private room is the front hall, or entrance room; she accordingly is the last person to retire and the first to rise. It is to be noted however that in the houses of the middle classes in the large cities there is usually now a small room for the servant-girl. The gejo draws the water from the well, washes the rice, lights the fires, cooks and lives in the dingy and usually smoky kitchen, washes the clothes, aids in the sewing, and has no relaxation but an occasional festival. Her lot is truly pitiful.

Besides her living (eating what is left from the family meal), she usually receives some two to three yen per month. Recently however some have been receiving even as much as five yen. The drudgery and monotony of the life are usually such that the

opportunity to become a factory hand is quickly taken, especially as the cash earnings are relatively large. I am told by Japanese ladies that the problem of securing domestics in the cities or in the vicinities of factories is becoming serious.

Of course the average domestic has no opportunity nor desire for mental improvement. Having enjoyed no education to speak of, she can read neither papers nor books, nor may she attend meetings fitted to cultivate the mind or promote her higher life. Thus she is controlled by the culture and mental and moral traditions of the home in which she was reared.

Household domestics are recruited from farming and industrial families. They earn their living for from four to six years, until their parents or guardians find them husbands; for in Japan the girl has practically nothing to say as to whom she marries. Marriage is based, not on mutual acquaintance, much less on mutual attraction, but wholly on the judgment of parents or go-

betweens, and is from first to last—if it is proper—a utilitarian affair.

It thus comes to pass that in Japan domestics are, as a rule, young unmarried women. A domestic in her thirties, or over, is rare, and is almost certain to be a widow or a divorced woman.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOTEL AND TEA-HOUSE GIRLS

A DISTINCT class of domestics is that which serves in hotels, tea-houses, and restaurants. Here the hours of labor are longer,—from four or five in the morning till midnight, or later. My attention was early called to their hard lot by observing that the poor girl who was serving rice for my meal, sitting before me as I ate, often fell into a sleep, from which I had to awaken her to get my rice. Inquiry would show that she had risen at four o'clock that morning, and further questioning would bring the information that she had retired the previous night at midnight or later, sometimes even not till two o'clock! Rarely do these girls get five hours of rest; frequently there are not more than three. They must open all the *amado* (sliding wooden shutters which

protect the paper "windows"), and get the general cleaning done before the first guest rises, and must continue their service until late into the night, answering the calls of the guests, till the last one has retired. In addition to the usual cleaning of the rooms, which is really not much of an undertaking, these girls carry all the meals of all the guests from the kitchen on the ground floor to their rooms on the second or third floors, serve them while they eat, and carry away the trays when the meal is completed. In preparation for the night the girls bring out the heavy *futon* (quilts) and make the "beds" on the floor; and in the morning remove, fold, and lay them all away in closets. The work of a Japanese hotel is relatively heavy for the number of guests, but that which is most taxing is the long hours of service and the insufficient time for rest. As in the poorer homes, so in the poorer and smaller hotels, the girls have no private rooms, but sleep in entryways and reception-rooms. Of course they have neither time nor

opportunity for personal culture, nor even for recreation; and from the nature of their occupation, is it strange if they sometimes yield to the solicitations of guests?

These girls are of course neither professional prostitutes nor geisha. Yet I was assured by a provincial chief of police, some years ago when making investigations, that, in the eyes of the police, three fourths or four fifths of the girls in hotels and tea-houses are virtually prostitutes, though of course they have no licenses and are subject to no medical inspection. Occasionally they are arrested for illegal prostitution, at the instance however of brothel keepers. Hotels and tea-houses take pains to secure pretty girls for servants, in order to make their service attractive. It is a dreadful statement to make, but, if I am justified in judging from such facts as have come to my knowledge, it would appear that few traveling men in Japan feel any special hesitation in taking advantage—with financial compensation of course—of such opportunities as

are afforded them. Hotels give the girls their food, perhaps two gowns yearly, and generally a small payment in cash, but their principal earnings come from tips. This makes them attentive to the wants of the guests.

There are many first-class hotels throughout the country, but chiefly in the principal cities, to which geisha are not admitted, but in those hotels to which they are admitted the green country girls soon learn from them the brazen ways and licentious talk that are evidently pleasing to many of the guests. All in all the life and lot of the hotel and tea-house girl are deplorable indeed. She does differ from the geisha and licensed prostitute, however, in that she can leave her place and retire to her country home at any time, being held by no contract or debt. Hotel and tea-house girls are recruited largely from the families of artizans and small tradespeople, living in interior towns and villages; they do not often come from farming families, since they would lack the regular fea-

tures and light complexion desired by hotels. Their family pedigree explains in part this easy virtue. They are saved from more disaster than they actually meet, because geisha and prostitutes abound and are more attractive.

I remember, one summer at a little country hotel, a girl rushed into my room from a neighbor's in order to escape from the urgency of a guest. She told me the following day quite freely of her troubles, of the horrid men that came to the hotel, and of the fact that most of the girls did not mind what she found unendurable. She had been there but a few weeks and was resolved to go home as soon as possible, claiming it was better to starve than to lead such a hard and especially such a disgusting life. Realizing that I had an exceptional opportunity for sociological study, I improved the occasion and asked many questions. When asked for her reasons for not responding to the solicitations of the men, she replied that it was the fear of being laughed at should

she have a child. I could not learn that she had ever been taught to regard loose sexual relations before marriage as immoral or as intrinsically wrong. In her mind the question had no connection with religion, so far as I could discover. Her refusal was based wholly on utilitarian grounds.

At another hotel where I often stopped I noticed on one of my tours that an especially attractive girl of eighteen or nineteen, who usually waited on me, was no longer there. On asking her substitute what had become of her, I was told she had become a regular prostitute, having found she could earn much more money that way than at the hotel. I asked if the parents had not opposed. "O no!" replied the girl, "the parents were the ones who proposed it and arranged for it." I asked the substitute if she herself did not regard the business as shameful and immoral. She looked at me with apparent surprise, hardly understanding what I meant, evidently regarding the matter entirely as a financial one.

Here is another case. A number of Young Men's Christian Association secretaries, tramping in the Japanese Alps, were convinced by the noises one night at the hot springs that the five or six guides and porters were indulging in licentiousness. The next night it came out around the camp-fire that these guides and porters had paid the hotel girls five sen[1] (two and one-half cents) each.

Of course one may not generalize from three cases. But three such cases, together with the statement of the chief of police, and the experience, closely corresponding with my own, of many missionaries who have traveled in all parts of Japan, are strong evidence. I myself do not think that guests often solicit the girls, nor that hotel girls commonly yield to the requests of guests, but there can be no doubt that it occasionally happens, and is not regarded in any such way by either the men or the women as an

[1] A sen has the value of one-hundredth of a yen, or almost half a cent.

Occidental would expect. As said above, there are many hotels in the cities from which geisha are rigidly excluded, and where without doubt the relations of guests with hotel girls are above criticism.

It is an impressive fact of Japanese civilization that the "greenest" country girls can in but a few short weeks of hotel service become so graceful and attractive. That in their lives which to the Occidental is so deep a sin is nothing to them. Their calm, innocent eyes, winning ways, and gentle conversation can hardly fail to impress the foreigner. But compared with the girls in their homes they have lost that air of modesty and reserve which is so important an element in the charm of Japanese womanhood. The hotel and tea-house girl belongs rather to the geisha class, whose loud, harsh voices and artificial, coarse laughter are distinguishing characteristics. Girls of both these classes however have an advantage enjoyed by no other women in Japan, namely: that of meeting large numbers of

men of various occupations and interests. They hear varied conversation and thus become somewhat acquainted with the affairs of the outside world, which makes them more intelligent than the average Japanese woman, so that it is possible to carry on some sort of a conversation with them—a thing practically impossible with the average young woman of Japan.

In regard to the numbers of hotel domestics, I have found no statistics, but have no hesitation in venturing an estimate of many tens of thousands.

## CHAPTER IX

### FACTORY GIRLS AND WOMEN

AS already stated, many girls prefer factory work to that of domestic service, either in private families or in hotels. From ancient times there have been small industrial enterprises, employing each a few hands in various lines of work, such as the reeling and spinning of silk and cotton thread and the weaving of cloth; but since the war with China there have arisen enormous factories, after the fashion of Western lands, which have introduced great changes in the industrial situation and in the condition of the working classes.

The government report for 1912 shows that there were 863,447 individuals employed in 15,119 factories having ten or more hands each. Of these, 348,230 were men and 515,217 were girls and women. In addition it

reports 427,636 weaving houses, having 733,-039 looms and employing 697,698 operators. No statement is made as to the proportion of the sexes. Remembering that the government statistics take no account of industrial enterprises employing less than ten hands, it is probably safe to estimate the number of women employed in exclusively non-domestic occupations at not less than a million.

We are not concerned however with the industries themselves, but rather with the conditions under which the operatives work and the effect of the work on their lives and characters. To begin with the more pleasant side of the question, there are factories which come well up toward the ideal. The terms of employment, the wages paid, the provisions for ill health, for accident, for long service and old age; the rooms for sleeping, eating, and recreation; the bathing establishments; the education given to those who need it; the public lectures and religious and ethical instruction given at fixed times in the

public halls of the factories, Buddhist and Christian teachers being impartially invited; the provisions for marriage of employees and arrangements that each couple have a separate suite of rooms, and that the infants are cared for while the mother is in the mill; these and other provisions show that the best in Japan is up to a high level of excellence. Such is the policy of the Kanegafuchi Company, which owns a score of mills in different parts of Japan, and whose success moreover is so great that it is now buying up less successful competitors.

For several years this company has set aside annually 20,000 yen ($10,000) for its relief and pension fund for operatives. In June, 1913, in addition to its regular appropriation, it voted an extra $50,000 for a "welfare promotion fund."

The president of the Fuji Cotton Spinning Company was given in 1913 a retiring grant of $50,000, inasmuch as the great success of this company had been due to his skill and energy. He however presented the entire

amount to the "employers' relief fund, and it was decided to make this gift the nucleus of a permanent endowment fund."

There is a silk factory in Ayabe, the Gunze Seishi Kwaisha, whose record is the most wonderful of all. It is managed by a Christian, who runs it entirely with a view to the benefit of the workers and the district. No girls of that district go elsewhere for work. Once enrolled as members of the working force they are regularly instructed, both in general education and in their particular duties; they earn good wages, keep good health, receive Christian instruction, have their regular rest days, remain the full number of years, help support the family and earn enough besides to set themselves up in married life, and are now beginning to send their daughters to the same factory. This Christian factory is Christianizing the district. The rising moral and religious life is transforming even the agricultural and other interests of the region. So high is the grade of silk thread produced, and so uni-

form and reliable is the quality, that it alone of all the factories in Japan is able to export its product direct to the purchasing firm in the United States, which buys the entire output at an annual cost of about $500,000, and without intermediate inspection at Yokohama. Here we have a splendid illustration of the way in which Christian character is solving the problem arising from the low moral and economic ideals of the masses of Japan's working classes. As a rule the modern industrial worker does not put moral character into his work; and a wide complaint of Occidental importers of Japanese products is that goods are not made according to contract or sample. This is one of the greatest obstacles to the continuous prosperity of any Japanese industry; for as soon as a large demand has arisen in foreign lands for any given article, its quality, as a rule, has rapidly deteriorated. It is this unreliability of Japanese workmen that makes so difficult direct exportation to foreign lands without the supervision of Oc-

cidental middlemen. The Christian Gunze Seishi Kwaisha is one of the splendid exceptions which shows what Japanese workmen and manufacturers can do, when controlled by high ideals and motives.

Unfortunately however not all factories and their managers have the same spirit, aim, or skill. Many factories are the exact opposite in every respect to those owned by the Kanegafuchi and Gunze Seishi companies. My personal attention was first called to the heartrending condition of servitude imposed on vast numbers of girls by reading, a score of years ago, of a fire in the dormitory of an Osaka factory. The dormitory was in a closed compound, whose doors and gates were carefully locked to keep the girls from running away. The result was the death, if I remember correctly, of every inmate, of whom there were several score.

My personal knowledge in regard to the conditions of life and work of factory operatives was secured in Matsuyama, Shikoku,

a small inland city of some forty thousand inhabitants, having but a single cotton thread spinning factory. It had no dormitories of its own, but sent its operatives to certain specified boarding-houses in the town. Through a Mr. Omoto, who was at that time working in the factory, and whose life story is given in the final chapter, I became intimately acquainted with the conditions prevailing in Matsuyama. In 1901, when Mr. Omoto began to work in the factory, he was amazed to see how many were the children taking their turns in work along with the older girls by day and by night. Large numbers ranged from seven to twelve years old, the majority, however, being from fifteen to twenty. They worked in two shifts of twelve hours each, but as they were required to clean up daily they did not get out till six-thirty or seven, morning and night. The only holidays for these poor little workers came two or three times a month, when the shifts changed; but even then there was special cleaning, and the girls who had

worked all night were kept till nine and even ten in the morning. He was also deeply impressed with their wretched condition and immoral life. The majority of them could neither read nor write; their popular songs were indecent, and they were crowded together in disease-spreading and vermin-breeding, immoral boarding-houses, where they were deliberately tempted. Some of the landlords were also brothel keepers.

Mr. Omoto, having opportunity as official "visitor" to become accurately acquainted with their life, told me in detail the conditions which have been briefly summarized above. The boarding-houses were only for girls from out of town. They had to be "recognized" by the factory, and the girls had to live in the houses to which they were assigned. Of course the purpose of these houses was to make money. The financial, hygienic, intellectual, and moral interests of the girls were wholly ignored. They were crowded into ill-ventilated, sunless rooms, the two shifts occupying the same

rooms alternately. Personal extravagance was purposely stimulated, for girls in debt to the keepers were compelled to stay to work off their debts. Drinking and immoral carousings were their only recreation. As might be expected, sickness was common and epidemics frequent. Many girls returned to their homes after a few months in the "city" ruined not only in health but in character,—premature mothers of illegitimate children.

The conditions of the factory girls in Matsuyama were not unique. Miss J. M. Holland, a Church of England missionary in Osaka, recently told me some of her observations and experiences. She has devoted the larger part of her time for fifteen years to work among factory girls, and on the whole can report improvement. When she began her visits to the factories, the conditions were often appalling. It was not uncommon for girls working on the night shift to be kept, on one pretext or another, till noon the next day, making eighteen hours

of work. The conditions of work and life were such that the girls frequently ran away, to prevent which the dormitories were virtually prisons within the factory compounds. The girls were not allowed to go out on the streets, were given no opportunity for recreation, and of course no education. They were underfed, overworked, and punished in various ways by their overseers, cuffed and sometimes whipped, for disobedience or blunders. The daily papers of those days had frequent items reporting oppression and ill treatment; to be deprived of wages as punishment was a common experience; police occasionally discovered girls working in cellars and vaults as punishment for misdeeds; girls sometimes escaped in their night clothes, and on a few occasions the girls rebelled and did personal violence to the overseers.

But, as already stated, the general conditions are now much better, for it was gradually found that such ill-treated labor was not profitable. "Most of the superintendents in Osaka are now splendid men, who on the

whole take good care of the girls and wish to treat them honorably." The crying evils of the past have been largely done away. Rest, recreation, education, wages, and health are receiving careful consideration at all the leading factories. Still, no true parent would send a daughter to work in such a place, unless under the stress of dire poverty. There are still many small children under ten years of age, whose parents make false statements in regard to their ages. The work is from six in the morning to six in the evening. This means rising at four-thirty every morning for work on the day shift. Some factories have abolished the night shift. Fifteen minutes are allowed for rest in the middle of the forenoon, thirty minutes for lunch, and fifteen minutes again in the afternoon, giving thus eleven hours of steady work per day and the same per night. On pay days the girls, after standing eleven hours, have to stand in file from one to three hours more, according to their luck, and Miss Holland says that such long hours of standing result in

serious organic difficulties. One half of the girls fail to work out their three years' contract, returning to their homes before time for marriage, seriously injured, if not completely ruined, physically. So long as this system continues, she adds, skilled labor is impossible. While some factories take great care that girls are carefully guarded from evil, others exercise no control whatever over their goings and doings. One factory she named as allowing its girls to be out on the streets till two o'clock in the morning. It insists on only two and a half hours of sleep! The difficulties connected with private boarding-houses for factory girls have proved so great that most of them have been closed.

One of the tragic aspects of factory life in Japan is the large number of what would seem to us avoidable accidents, due to the fact that the girls know nothing whatever about machinery. Large factories accordingly keep surgeons on hand to care for the wounded. Miss Holland says that in one Osaka factory where there are a thousand

operatives, the kind-hearted surgeon told her they had an average of fifty accidents daily which needed his attention. The little children especially suffer, often losing fingers. Not long since five fingers were clipped off in a single day! Miss Holland added that, improved though the conditions are, factory life for children is a "murder of the innocents." As a rule the food provided in factory dormitories is still inadequate. When asked whether corporal punishment is still inflicted, she expressed a doubt, having heard of none for a long time.

In her conversation Miss Holland expressly limited her report to the factories she knows in Osaka. The question arises whether the conditions there may not be peculiar. May not factory conditions in Yokohama and Tokyo, where government inspection and control would theoretically be most complete, be better than elsewhere? The facts do not seem to justify such a surmise. The Kanegafuchi Company and some others have good factories everywhere, but there

would seem also to be bad ones everywhere.

A Japanese book on *Industrial Education* has recently been published by a Mr. R. Uno, who, for fifteen years, has been a devoted student of Japan's industrial problems. A summary of the statistics there given appeared in May, 1914, in the *Tokyo Advertiser,* from which I cull the following facts and figures.

In the cotton thread and spinning factories of Japan, there are 81 girls to 19 men. Out of 1,000 girls, 386 are over 20 years of age, 317 are from 17 to 20, 191 are from 15 to 16, 73 are from 12 to 14, while 7 girls out of a thousand are under 12 years of age. The vast majority of factory girls live in the factory dormitories, which are of enormous size. In the region of Osaka there are more than 30,000 girls working in 30 factories; in these same factories there are less than 7,000 men. Three of these factories employ over 3,000 girls each, while three more employ 2,000

and upward. These girls are herded together in enormous dormitories, disastrous both to health and morals. Statistics covering a number of years show that out of every 1,000 girls, 270 work less than six months at the same place; 200 less than one year, 179 less than two years; 121 less than three years; 141 less than five years, and only 89 pass the five-year period. The usual reason for this extraordinary fluctuation of workers is that the girls break down in health. Government statistics declare that out of every 100 girls to enter upon factory work 23 die within one year of their return to their homes, and of these 50 per cent. die of tuberculosis. But it is also asserted that 60 per cent. of the girls who leave home for factory work never return. Of the criminal girls arrested in Osaka for a certain period, 49 per cent. had been factory hands. As to the education of factory girls it is stated that, out of 1,000, the number that had completed the required number of years of schooling (six) was 450, while

385 were entirely without education. Out of 1,000 girls, 453 were orphans. Of 1,000 girls, 611 came from farmers' homes, 166 from those of fishermen, and 55 from merchant homes, the remaining 168 being scattering. Factory girls earn and can save more than almost any other class. The average earnings per month are stated to be $4.67. The girl pays $1.20 per month for food, which is less than the actual cost, the factory providing the balance, namely, $1.30. The average girl sends home fifty cents per month. Three out of ten girls spend the balance entirely on clothes, five out of ten on cakes and theaters, while two out of ten save it. Such are some of the statements made by Mr. Uno in his enlightening book.

In the September, 1910, number of the *Shin Koron,* a monthly magazine published in Tokyo, is an article by Professor Kuwada (of the Tokyo Imperial University) entitled "The Pitiful Environment of Factory Girls." He gives a detailed statement of the conditions of factory workers, in which he

estimates the number of female laborers in factories containing ten or more hands at 700,000, of whom ten per cent. are under fourteen years of age. In tobacco factories ten per cent., in match factories twenty per cent., and in glass factories thirty per cent. of the girls are under ten years of age. He vigorously condemns the situation as threatening the future of the working class, whose prospective mothers are thus being destroyed. The efforts of the government during recent years to enact factory laws have been successfully thwarted thus far, says Professor Kuwada, by shortsighted, selfish capitalists. The girls are brought in from their country homes by false promises. They are told of the beautiful sights to be seen, theaters to be visited, the regular Sunday rest, and even of the splendid care and education they will receive from the factory. There is also stealing of expert workers from one factory by the artful stratagems of another. There are factories which resort to devices for defrauding helpless operatives. In one town

where there are many factories, it is customary to work overtime by setting back the hands of the clock. To conceal this from the operatives, no factory blows its whistles! Some factories do not give time for the girls to rest even while they eat, but require them to work with the right hand while they eat with the left. Night work in which both male and female operatives are engaged together is most demoralizing. Punishment of various kinds is administered. In addition to fines, in some places the girls are imprisoned in dark rooms, rations are reduced, their arms are bound and the lash applied freely, and in extreme cases they are stripped to the waist and marched through the factory among young men and girls, bearing a red flag tied to the back! Superintendents are invariably men.

So appalling was the statement made by Professor Kuwada that I could scarcely believe him in all the details, particularly in regard to the use of the lash and the stripping to the waist. I accordingly wrote both

to him and to Professor Abe of Waseda University, who has made special study of the social problems and conditions of industry. Professor Kuwada, I learned, has been a careful student of social and industrial conditions for nearly twenty years, and is one of the leaders in the Society for the Study of Social Politics, composed of one hundred and fifty university professors and high government officials. This society was organized to aid the government in its efforts to secure social and industrial reforms. In reply to my inquiries Professor Kuwada says that most of the facts given concerning silk factories he has himself observed. Those concerning cotton spinning factories he has derived from reliable sources, chiefly from the officers of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, who are especially engaged in making investigations in regard to industrial conditions. Much of the testimony rests on the statements of the girls themselves. Some of the facts come from local police and some from the published reports of the Depart-

ment of Agriculture and Commerce. "The article in the *Shin Koron* may therefore be regarded as semi-official," says Professor Abe. Since the appearance of the article referred to above, no reply has been made to it by factory owners or managers. As to the stripping of a girl to the waist and marching her through the factory filled with operatives, male and female, Professor Kuwada was told this by the girl herself. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to doubt the testimony. Nor is it probable that the cases cited are absolutely unique, although I think it highly probable that such extreme indignities and punishments are rare,—they are so out of keeping with the whole trend of Japanese civilization and culture. Mrs. Binford, a missionary in Mito, assures me, however, that altering the hands of the clock is a practise known to her. Testimony is widespread that girls are secured for factories by all kinds of false statements.

In view of the frightful conditions of industrial labor thus indicated by Mr. Uno and

Professor Kuwada, it is amazing that the Diet has refused on several successive occasions to enact suitable laws. The government began to realize in 1898 the need for legislation on these matters. A bill which was drafted and presented in 1902 was rejected, as were also three subsequent bills. The chief feature of the bill presented during the winter of 1910-11 was the provision that no factory may employ girls under twelve, and that girls of any age and youth under sixteen may not be kept at work for more than twelve hours per day, nor be made to do night work without "special reason." While some provisions of this bill were enacted and others amended, those considered most important by social reformers and by the government were virtually rejected. The bill was indeed passed, but with the added provision that the important clauses, relative to ages and night work, be inoperative for a period of fifteen years (!) in order to give time to the factories involved to adjust themselves to the new conditions. Since that time

no further factory legislation has been enacted. Is it not astounding that in a land on the whole so progressive as Japan the difficulty of securing reform should be found in the Diet? The administration at this point is ahead of the representatives of the people, as it is indeed in many other respects. The fact is, as Professor Kuwada points out, that the "representatives" in both the lower and upper houses represent the financial interests of capitalists, rather than the human interests of the masses.

But the reader, in his indignation over the situation of factory workers in Japan, should remember that Japan is no exceptional sinner among the nations. Christian England and America have had conditions equally bad, and possibly worse. Dr. Washington Gladden, in his article on "The Reason for the Unions," in the New York *Outlook* for March, 1911, makes the following statements in regard to the condition of labor in England in the early part of the nineteenth century. Men and women stood daily at their

AT WORK IN A SILK FACTORY

tasks, from twelve to fourteen and fifteen hours; a working day of sixteen hours was not an unheard-of thing. Government reports of this period show that children of five and six years of age were frequently employed in factories. "Nor was this unmeasured abuse of child labor confined to the cotton, silk, and wool industries. . . . The report of 1842 is crammed with statements as to the fearful overwork of girls and boys in iron and coal mines, which doubtless had been going on from the end of the eighteenth century; . . . Children could get about where horses and mules could not. Little girls were forced to carry heavy buckets of coal up high ladders, and little girls and boys instead of animals dragged the coal bunkers. Women were constantly employed underground at the filthiest tasks. Through all this period the wages gravitated downward and family income was steadily lowered, while the cost of food increased. The homes of the workers were ruined. In a certain congested district there lived 26,830

persons in 5,366 families, three fourths of which possessed but one room each. The rooms were without furniture, without everything; two married couples often shared the same room. In some cases there was not even a heap of straw on which to sleep. In one cellar the pastor found two families and a donkey; two of the children had died and the third was dying." And these conditions existed, not in days of industrial depression, but in flush times; business was booming and wealth accumulating in the hands of factory owners and employers.

Many of the conditions of industrial workers even in the United States to-day are heart-rending in the extreme. Who could read of the strike of the shirt-waist makers of New York in the winter of 1909-10 without deep indignation over the conditions under which those brave girls worked, and against which they rebelled? The National Committee on Child Labor reported in the spring of 1911 that there were over 60,000 children in the factories of the United States, mostly

in the South. Before condemning Japan unduly, Occidentals should remember that their own record is none too bright.

If comparison is to be made however between Japan and the West, it may be made along other lines. The West fell into its industrial difficulties with no example from which to learn. But this is not true of Japan. She can easily learn the lesson of a century of Western experience; but she seems slow to do it. Then again in Japan it is the government that is feebly leading, and the official popular representatives who are both blind and resisting, whereas in the West the great movements for industrial reform are movements of the people themselves, backed up and oftentimes led by enlightened humanitarian and Christian popular opinion. In the West, the churches are fairly in line with forward social movements, whereas in Japan, Shintoism, Confucianism, and even Buddhism are apparently wholly indifferent to the economic and even ethical condition of the nation's toilers. Furthermore, we are

seeing to-day in Japan the strange phenomenon of one section of the government seeking to ameliorate social and economic conditions, and at the same time another, seemingly mortally afraid of allowing the people either to discuss these matters or to attempt reform movements themselves. Labor unions are strictly forbidden, and any person advocating socialism is under strict police surveillance. Strikes are illegal and their promoters are liable to criminal punishment. Anomalous as it may be, the government seems to be seeking to destroy that enlightened popular opinion on which it must rely for the efficient enforcement of its own plans for social betterment of the working classes.

I have dwelt at considerable length on the conditions of factory workers, for later on I shall describe a sociological experiment among this class.

## CHAPTER X

### GEISHA (HETÆRÆ)

THE word *geisha* means an "accomplished person." A geisha is invariably a young woman who has had years of training fitting her to provide social entertainment for men. The *gei* acquired are skill in playing the samisen (a three-stringed guitar), singing catching ditties, taking part in conversation and repartee, and in "dancing," which is to the Western mind rather a highly conventional posturing, with deft manipulations of the inevitable fan. Years of exacting and diligent work are required for proficiency in these "gei,"—the Geisha School in Kyoto provides a course of six or seven years.

According to the Japanese ideal, geisha singing must be shrill, and to secure this

quality the voice is purposely strained till it is "cracked." Girls eight to ten years old are sometimes given their "singing lessons" in the frosty air of winter mornings before sunrise, or late at night, in order that they may take cold in the throat and then, by persistent, vigorous use, the voice is "broken" for life. Training in dancing and samisen playing is also prolonged and severe, for no pains are spared in efforts to excel. These efforts however are due, not to the will or desire of the *maiko,* the poor little girl who is being trained, but to the persistence of her owner.

Only daughters of the very poor are secured for this outwardly beautiful and attractive, but inwardly repulsive, soul-destroying life. Practically speaking, geisha are the property of the old women who support and educate them through the years of their childhood, and who rent them out by the hour for the entertainment of men at social functions. Such functions would, indeed, be inane without geisha to serve the meals in

their dainty ways, to fill the sake[1] cups for guests, to share in conversation by adding the spice, to provoke laughter, themselves laughing loudly and often, and at the proper time, to present their music, their singing, and their dancing. Dressed in faultless style, in richest silks and brilliant colors, geisha are moving pictures which have charmed generations of Japanese men and, in recent decades, many foreigners. Japanese political party dinners and consultations are often held in restaurants, where geisha make the fun and pour the wine. If foreign guests are to be entertained by wealthy individuals, by companies, or even by cities, the inevitable geisha is there, and is presented as a characteristic product of Japan—which she truly is. But while there is about her a certain charm of manner and dress, to one who watches her face, looking for traces of a soul, the story is all too plain—behind the harsh laugh and stoical face it is impossible not to recognize

[1] Sake (pronounced sah'-ke) is the fermented liquor of Japan, made from rice.

that there is an empty and often a bleeding heart.

The lives of these girls are pitiful in the extreme. Chosen from among the families of the poor on the basis of their prospective good looks and ability to learn, they leave their homes at an early age and are subjected to the severe drill already outlined. They go through their lessons with rigid, mechanical accuracy. In public they appear in gorgeous robes, their faces painted and powdered, artificiality dominating everything about them,—clothing, manners, and smiles. As a rule nothing is done to develop their minds, and of course the cultivation of personal character is not even thought of. They are instructed in flippant conversation and pungent retort, that they may converse interestingly with the men, for whose entertainment they are alone designed. The songs learned, some of the dances performed, and the conversational repertoire acquired are commonly reported to be highly licentious, but these are the gei that best please the men,

to whom they are open for private engagements from the time they are eighteen years of age. If, however, a geisha is exceptionally beautiful, her owner does not allow her to enter on such duties, for experience has shown that her beauty is soon lost in this way, and with it her highest earning capacity.

Many geisha undoubtedly develop considerable personal ability. The severe drill undergone could hardly fail to call forth their powers of mind, and intimate association with educated and quasi-cultured men serves further to stimulate their mental faculties. In native ability too they are not lacking, though drawn from the lowest classes of society, for, as will soon be more fully explained, they sometimes possess strains of high lineage. The national custom, which represses the normal intellectual development and social instincts of cultured, respectable women, is removed from this one class, which is favored by many circumstances. They are not subjected to the debauching excesses usual with the ordinary prostitute, nor to humili-

ating medical inspection. They are not conscious of popular disapproval, but on the contrary are the beauties of the town, their photographs for sale on every street. Indeed one well-informed gentleman told me that probably ten per cent. of the geisha enter the calling by their own choice. No wonder that from time to time the tale is told of some Japanese man of social position falling under the spell of an accomplished geisha, whom he prefers to any of the silent, passive, timid, incompetent girls selected for him, who in all probability have never talked with any man except immediate relatives or tradesmen. The national custom which predetermines the social incompetence of the majority of cultured women compensates for the loss by providing this geisha class. Not until Japanese ladies can hold their own in social life will the vocation of the geisha be ended.

Among the surprises one meets in studying the geisha question is the fact that not a few of the girls have features which in-

O HAMAYU (GEISHA)
Most celebrated in Tokyo

dicate distinguished ancestry. My explanation for this fact is the further fact that for ages the standards of moral life in Japan have allowed large freedom of sexual relations. The result is that in the lowest classes, from which geisha are recruited, there run strains of gentle blood. It thus comes to pass that now in the midst of coarse surroundings and in deep poverty there are born of parents manifestly belonging to the lowest class, children of exceptional beauty, fitted, so far as individual appearance indicates, to belong to the highest ranks of society. Whether or not this suggested explanation is correct as a matter of historic fact I am not able to say, but I offer it as the most plausible that has occurred to me.

Parents in this class of society much prefer daughters to sons, for they are likely to become valuable sources of income. At eight or nine, those destined for the "accomplished" calling are put into the care of some experienced geisha and a mutual contract is given for a specific period (five or six years),

during which the child is termed a *maiko* (dancing girl). As a rule the parents receive a small sum at the beginning of this first period. The owner undertakes to support and train the girl, and expects to profit by her earnings. By the time the girl is fifteen or sixteen she has finished her apprenticeship, when, if she has exceptional graces and charms likely to win her a place in the highest social gatherings, she will secure quite a competency (many hundreds of yen, and in some cases even a few thousand) for the keeper and parents. On the expiration of the first contract a new one is made, and so on, until the girl has passed her prime and is no longer sought for entertainments. If in the interval she has not become the concubine of some rich man, she then either returns to her poor home or, what is more usual, becomes a servant in a hotel or tea-house. If her ability is exceptional, she may set up as geisha keeper, train other maiko, employ younger geisha, and so make her living.

The great ambition of a geisha is to "catch" some wealthy man of rank with her charms and become his concubine. My informant estimates that this is what happens to perhaps one half of the geisha. In such cases the man pays down a handsome sum to the owner, who sends part of it to the parents. Thus he buys his concubine, whom he usually keeps in a villa, not his home. I have asked if geisha ever become true, legal wives and am told "only very rarely." But, if they do, are they cordially received by the man's kindred? "Oh, no! that is not possible," is the repeated answer. The effects of her training can never be obliterated, and the new relatives cannot forget the despicable class from which she comes, and the calling by which she has gained her husband. She may become indeed refined and altogether correct in manner, but the taint of her origin as a rule adheres to her. Then too the years of immoral life before she won her husband make it a rare thing for a geisha to have children, and childless

wives in Japan are not at a premium, for the prime purpose of marriage is the maintenance of the family line.

Foreigners commonly say that geisha are not prostitutes. It is true they are not licensed, that is to say, professional, prostitutes in the eye of the law, nor are they procurable, as are regular prostitutes, by the average man, for the expense is too great. But the chief of police already referred to, and many Japanese of whom I have inquired, insist that a large proportion of geisha are corrupt—two geisha keepers have estimated the proportion as high as ninety per cent. Geisha who decline engagements leading to immorality are rare indeed, and for that very reason are unpopular.

But better than generalized statements is the story of an actual life. There lives today in Hyogo a paralytic whose influence through her words, newspaper articles, and books is widely felt throughout central Japan. She is one of the few girls who, though trained as a geisha, refused to follow the

calling. The story of her life is worthy of more than passing mention.

Her father died in her infancy, and shortly after the death of her mother, who had married, her stepfather likewise married again. These stepparents, deciding to have her become a geisha, expended much time and money on her training.

When she was prepared at sixteen years of age, she was entrusted to a woman whose business it was to find employment for geisha in hotels and tea-houses. This woman took her to a house in Osaka, where there were already many geisha and regular prostitutes. Learning the nature of the duties expected of her, she positively refused to comply. In spite of the fact that it was twenty miles to her home and that there were but two sen in her pocket, she escaped from the hotel, spent one sen on bridge toll, one sen on a lunch, and succeeded in walking all that distance alone, reaching home after midnight, the home from which she had been sent out with hopes that she should win for her step-

parents an ample support. The reception accorded her can be fancied. She held firmly however to her resolve, preferring poverty and hard toil to luxury and fine clothing along with that service on which these were conditioned. Work was found for her in a factory, then as a family servant, and finally at a small tea-house, where during the winter she was especially exposed to the cold. An attack of rheumatism developed into paralysis. With no hope of recovery she longed for death, for her stepparents, considering the case hopeless, neglected to care for her properly, although she was so helpless. She could not feed herself, nor even crawl to the well in which she wished to drown herself,—the final resource of many a despairing Japanese woman. But, by a strange series of circumstances, or should we not say by a merciful Providence? a Christian man discovered and befriended her, told the story of Jesus, and revealed the Savior. Her faith soon became so strong and her words proved so thoughtful and helpful to those Christian

friends who came to see her, that her influence began to spread. She found she could manage to write with her crippled hand, and as what she wrote was like her spoken words, simple and strong, it soon found its way into print. She was finally led to write the story of her life, and this book, with other articles written by her, has afforded a small income, which with additional help from friends has secured a comfortable home for herself and the family of which she is now the center. Her name is Zako Aiko, and she lives in Hyogo.

A few geisha, coming under Christian influences, have been converted, and so far as I know, such persons leave the calling altogether, as incompatible with Christian principles. But condemnation of the whole geisha system is not confined to Christians. Many Japanese, entirely outside our Christian circles, regard it as a disgrace to the country, and wish the whole business, along with licensed prostitution, concealed from public view. For instance, a man of high

official rank, president of a large institution, tells me he regrets that there is no first-class Japanese hotel in Kyoto at which he may entertain foreign guests in Japanese style, except where geisha serve the meals. Rather than countenance the geisha system, he prefers to take his guests to a hotel where the service is not so perfect but where the women employed are above suspicion. He deplored the fact one day that all foreigners coming to Kyoto in the spring visit the *Miyako odori,* commonly known in English as the "Cherry Dance." I myself have seen this performance more than once, and found nothing objectionable in either the so-called dancing, its setting, or its accompaniments. It nevertheless affords opportunity for the display of something like eighty or ninety geisha, and helps to maintain the business and the system. As indicating the status of geisha in the best Japanese society, it is significant that all geisha are rigidly excluded from every entertainment where any member of the Imperial household is present.

It is often said by foreigners that geisha and prostitutes not infrequently make happy matches, and by legal marriage escape from their unhappy lives of shame. This is one of those pretty fables one would like to believe, but the facts do not seem to support the theory. There are, no doubt, rare instances where such has been the case. I have known two women who had been geisha and who married men of some position. In one case the man was a physician. When I knew the family the ex-geisha had been in the home a number of years and was a lovely, modest, capable woman, a regular member of my wife's cooking class. But it was noticeable that she always took a "back seat" among the ladies; she was tolerated by them and treated not unkindly, but it was clear that they looked down on her. The man's kindred never favored the match, and would not let him marry the woman legally, so she lived in his house, took excellent care of his first wife's children, and was to them all that a stepmother could be, yet, so far as I know,

she has never gained her full position in the home of her husband nor among his relatives.

The other case I knew but slightly, as she died but a few weeks after I made her acquaintance, but she must have been a woman of exceptional character. She was a Christian and highly respected in the church.

Such cases, however, are rare. A geisha may be in high favor during the decade or more when at the height of her physical charms, though even then her inner life is empty and loveless; but when no longer attractive she is cast aside as a faded flower, to spend the rest of her life forlorn, unloved, and uncared for. Truly, the way of the geisha is hard!

Geisha naru mi to;
Michi tobu tori wa
Doko no idzuko de
Hateru yara,

is a popular ditty regarding the final disappearance of geisha from sight. It may be roughly translated: "What becomes of

geisha, do you ask? I ask in turn, where end their lives the birds that fly along the road?"

In regard to the number of geisha, Mr. Murphy's statistics show that from 1887 to 1897 they increased throughout Japan from 10,326 to 26,536, and since then the increase has been relatively small, the number being now in the vicinity of 30,000.

So far as is known to me, no regular Christian or philanthropic work is done for this class.

## CHAPTER XI

### *SHOGI* (LICENSED PROSTITUTES)

IT may seem strange to class prostitutes among working women, but the facts require such classification, for, not only so far as the parents and brothel keepers are concerned, but also so far as the girls themselves are concerned, it is entirely a matter of money. If the business did not pay splendidly, the keepers would not erect their handsome buildings, pay the heavy license fees, nor buy the girls from the parents at considerable cost. And on the other hand, if the parents did not receive what they regard as large sums for their daughters, the latter would not be sold to such lives of shame and disease. And so far as the poor victims are concerned, there is abundant evidence that they often go into the wretched business solely at the command of

their parents, for among the lowest class the noble doctrine of obedience to parents is shamefully perverted to this vile end. Children are taught that obedience is a child's first duty, regardless of the question whether the thing required by parents is right or wrong. The girl goes to the brothel in obedience to her parents, who send her there to earn a living for herself and to help them out of special financial difficulties. Thus from first to last, so far as the girls, the parents, and the keepers are concerned, the question is economic.

Among the working women of Japan prostitutes surely are the most pitiful of all. They give the most and get the least. They receive no training, like the geisha; have no liberty; to prevent their running away, are imprisoned in brothels, or if diseased or ill, in hospitals; and have no friends except possibly other prostitutes. Most of them soon loathe the business, but are helpless, hopeless prisoners,—for the keepers who paid their parents a few score or hundreds of yen

and loaded them with beautiful clothes, charge all these items to their account, so that they are under a heavy debt which must be paid before they can leave. This debt the laws of the land theoretically ignore but practically recognize, for the "keeper" keeps the books as well as the brothel, and the police and officials are often on his side. In this way licentiously inclined officials, merchants, and travelers provide for the easy, economical, and legal satisfaction of their desires.

I do not propose here to give a detailed account of this distressful and disgusting "business." Those who desire more information should procure *The Social Evil in Japan,* by the Rev. U. G. Murphy. Some years ago Mr. Murphy, by grit and pluck, carried certain test cases through the courts and secured legal opportunity for girls to quit the business if they wished. The Salvation Army and some of the daily papers took pains to let the brothel girls know their legal rights, and in a short period over

twelve thousand, at that time over one third of the whole number, left the brothels, so that for a while the business was prostrated in many quarters. This single fact shows the spirit and attitude of a large number of the girls. Since then the wily keepers and all interested in maintaining this lucrative trade have succeeded in modifying the administration of the regulations, so that the girls are again closely controlled.

There is however a rising public conscience and an abolition movement is gathering strength. The virtual slavery of the girls; the fact that they are openly bought and sold, and that, too, under governmental supervision and sanction; the cruelty inflicted on many girls by their keepers; the fraud practised in connection with their accounts, whereby a girl is kept hopelessly in debt, so that, however faithful she may be, release is impossible, and indeed the more faithful the more profitable she is to her keeper—all these facts are becoming widely known and are beginning to arouse public indignation.

The government is openly charged with protecting slavery, and that of the worst kind. High government officials are being condemned for licentiousness.

As signs of the times, I give a few facts. In the summer of 1909 the wealthiest and most centrally located prostitute quarter in Osaka was completely wiped out by a great fire. Before the flames were fully out, the anti-brothel forces realized their opportunity and under the leadership of the Young Men's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Union began to agitate for refusal to allow the rebuilding of the business in that region of the city. A petition was prepared and signed by one hundred thousand people. Large numbers of Osaka's best citizens allied themselves with the movement. The result was that the authorities in charge saw fit to yield to the pressure and arranged that the new buildings for prostitution should be erected on the outskirts of the city.

In the winter of 1911, the city of Tokyo suffered from a great conflagration which

completely destroyed the section of the city known as "Yoshiwara,"[1] which for three hundred years has been assigned to prostitution. This center of the social evil had become enormously wealthy, and such magnificent buildings had been erected for the business that it had become one of the famous sights of Tokyo. Before the fire was fairly over, the anti-brothel forces began to organize their campaign, which continued for months. A magazine called *Purity* (*Kaku Sei*) was started. In this case, however, success did not crown their efforts.

Not long since an army division was located in the vicinity of Wakayama, a city of considerable importance, not far from Osaka, in which there have never been any prostitute houses. This led to the suggestion that it would be well to open there a regular prostitute quarter. The matter was keenly discussed and the proposition carried through the city council and authorized by

[1] Foreigners commonly, but mistakenly, suppose that "Yoshiwara" means "Prostitute Quarter."

all the lower officials, but when it came finally before the prefectural governor for signature, it was vetoed, and the veto message is worthy of preservation and careful consideration by those who are interested in these matters.

The governor says in his message: "I was early convinced that the establishment of licensed quarters in the city was harmful to the public interest. It has been a subject of discussion in Wakayama now for many years, and I have investigated the question thoroughly from the standpoint of public morals, health, and economics, at places with and without licensed quarters, and find that the existence of such institutions is distinctly harmful. The standard of morals is lowered, the public health impaired, disease made rampant, the young are sent into wrong channels, homes are broken up, and extravagance is encouraged. The state of affairs in Shingu, in this prefecture of Wakayama, where licensed houses have been established, clearly shows that the existence of such

places is extremely harmful to public interest. The majority representation to the authorities urged the establishment of licensed quarters on the ground that the quarters would promote the prosperity of that section of the city in which they were situated. It is true they may benefit a section of the city in one way, but the benefit so obtained would be offset by many other evils. The military authorities are strongly opposed to the establishment of licensed quarters, and their views are very reasonable. For these reasons I have decided to refuse permission for the establishment of licensed quarters in Wakayama city." [1]

In passing, it is worthy of record that the prefecture of Joshu has for over thirty years, by ceaseless vigilance, prevented government sanction of prostitution. Repeatedly has the battle been fought and repeatedly have the anti-brothel forces won. In this respect Joshu stands alone among the forty-eight prefectures of the Japanese empire.

[1] As translated by the *Japan Chronicle*, May 13, 1911.

As illustrating the low moral ideals prevailing among a certain class of men, Professor Abe of Waseda University, in a recent brothel-abolition speech, told of a certain politician who, though a fast liver, was praised because he never debauched the wives and daughters of his friends, but always confined himself to those women whose services he fully paid for in hard cash! Colonel Yamamuro, the highest Japanese officer in the Salvation Army, on the same evening, speaking of the low moral ideals of the classes from which prostitutes are drawn, said that in connection with the Salvation Army he had had opportunity to know of twelve hundred girls who had been aided in the two rescue homes of the Army. Of these twelve hundred about one half had been prostitutes. The reasons given by them for leaving were various, such as ill health, cruelty, lovers, but not one said she left the business because it was wrong. The evidence is full and convincing that a considerable section of the Japanese people do not

regard loose sexual relations as particularly immoral.

In regard to the statistics of prostitutes, the figures given by Mr. Murphy are probably the most accurate available, and are substantially official. Between 1887 and 1897 the number of prostitutes increased from 27,559 to 47,055, reaching their maximum in 1899, when there were 52,410. Then, following up the work of Mr. Murphy and the Salvation Army, came the "cessation movement," reducing the number to 40,195 in 1901, and the following year to 38,676. Since that date the number has grown. In two years four thousand fresh girls were bought up, and a thousand more the following year. The latest statistics are those for 1906, when the number of prostitutes was reported as 44,542. It is safe to say that at the present time the number is near, if it has not passed, the fifty thousand mark.

It would be natural to suppose that recruits for the geisha and shogi occupations

would be found largely among the poorest farmers, but both my outdoor man and also my cook assert that such is not the fact. "Farmers would never sell their daughters for such vile purposes, however poor they might become. Parents who do such things are only the degenerate creatures who live in cities," is the scornful remark of my gardener. My cook asserts the same thing, and adds that farmers' daughters have not the genteel features and figures nor the light complexion essential to girls seeking such occupations. Other investigations confirm these assertions. The great cities of Nagoya and Niigata, and indeed the whole of Echigo, are famous for the supply of girls they send to the brothels of Tokyo. A poor man with several daughters has a pretty good investment, and rejoices more at the birth of a girl than of a boy, because it means an early and definite income.

I found at one time in Matsuyama that all the girls of sixteen to eighteen years of age in a certain poor quarter had, in the

course of one year, been sold off to the brothels. About that time a man came to me with a pitiful story of poverty; he had five children, but unfortunately they were all boys; had they been girls, he said, he might have sold some of them and so not have needed to ask my aid!

The word used in connection with both geisha and prostitutes is perfectly frank; no effort is made to conceal by terms the nature of the transaction. The girls are "bought" and "sold." They employ the same words as those used in buying and selling animals, food, clothing—anything. Their purchase and sale is a regular business in which men and women openly engage, traveling the country over in search of girls, and conducting them in small groups to the keepers of brothels, who pay so much a head. And this takes place in civilized Japan! Moreover, in spite of the fact that girls may thus be bought, it is true that they are also occasionally stolen. I have known of a pitiful instance where the girl, a member of

a respectable family, was boxed and shipped on a steamer as freight, to elude the police, and taken to Siam. In five years she has succeeded in getting one letter to her home, but the parents dare not put the matter into the hands of Japanese officials, as that would make the situation hopeless.

But Occidentals may not forget how terrible a scourge is commercialized vice in civilized and so-called "Christian" Europe, and who has not heard of the "white slavery" of America, with its stealing of girls and young women for purposes of prostitution? The institution of comparisons between nations and individuals is alike odious, —but unavoidable. A fair comparison would seem to be that, whereas in the West the moral sense of a large proportion of the people is very strongly against the social evil and seeks to abolish it, in Japan the moral sense of the mass of the population acquiesces in the situation, so that the government and a vast majority of the influential people of the land unite to make the

business safe, legal, and remunerative; and that, while in Occidental Christian lands no girl can voluntarily enter this sphere of life without being conscious of its shame and immorality, many of the girls of Japan may have no adequate knowledge of these inevitable consequences until their fate has been sealed.

# CHAPTER XII

## AMELIORATIVE EFFORTS

THE reader will desire to know what, if any, have been the efforts to ameliorate the evils described in preceding pages. They are of two kinds: first, governmental in origin, general in scope, legal and educative in method; and second, private in origin, both general and specific in scope, personal, educative, ethical, and religious in method.

The general educational policy of the government is not to be regarded as a philanthropic or ameliorative effort to meet the conditions already described. This policy however does have a powerful elevating influence on the lives and character of the entire people. As we have seen, over ninety-seven per cent. of the girls of school age are in attendance, according to the reports. Though we allow a discount on these fig-

ures (and some may perhaps be necessary), we can still say that, if the present policy of six years of compulsory education is carried out, the rising generation of boys and girls will be able to read fairly well the daily paper and simple books. To millions of women this means the opening of doors of knowledge and opportunity which in ages past have been closed to them.

The government has also been the chief initiative force in all recent movements to improve the economic and industrial conditions of the people. Railroads in Japan owe their existence to the government, as also do many forms of modern industry. Agriculture and fruit and stock raising owe much to the government, which has imported Western seed, Western fruit trees, and new breeds of horses and cattle. All these efforts have done much to improve the economic conditions, thus elevating the scale of living. People eat better food and more of it, live in better houses, and wear better clothes than they did fifty or more years ago,

and—an important item—they pay less taxes in proportion to their income. A general uplifting process is modifying their life and thought, and this is profoundly affecting Japan's working classes, and, of course, her women.

In regard to the specific evils introduced by Western industrialism, we have already seen how the government has sought to remedy the difficulties, so far as laws can go, but hitherto its efforts have largely been thwarted by capitalists.

Among the notable efforts of the government to promote wise social reform movements have been the large gatherings, at considerable government expense, of leaders of philanthropic and benevolent institutions for instruction in the most recent and approved sociological principles. Competent specialists from all over the country have been employed to instruct these leaders, and thus the whole country is given the benefit of the special knowledge of the few. The government has also, during the past four

years, distributed some forty thousand yen annually among those eleemosynary institutions which it regards as models of efficiency.

Furthermore, opportunity for the higher education of women, first given on a wide scale during the past decade, while not yet affecting working women to any appreciable extent, cannot fail to do so as time passes, for it proclaims the intrinsic ability of woman and gives her a standing of intellectual equality with man, in sharp contrast to the humiliating position assigned to her by popular Buddhism, which has taught that women must be reborn as men before they can be saved. Indeed, they are born women because of their sins. A Japanese proverb has it that one must never trust a woman, even if she has borne you seven children! This long-believed doctrine as to the inherent incapacity and essential depravity of woman has no doubt been a powerful cause of her social degradation. Under the present system of general education, however, these

doctrines and beliefs will soon be completely overthrown, thus making room for and producing great changes in the social and industrial conditions of all women.

But the government is not the sole worker for the social amelioration of industrial conditions. Through private effort forces are being introduced which are more potent than any the government knows or can control. I refer to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This has already introduced such a leaven into Japanese society that nothing can now prevent its transforming the whole mass in time.

Should the entire foreign body of 624 Protestant and 371 Roman Catholic missionaries be withdrawn from Japan, there would still remain (January, 1914) 728 ordained and 713 unordained Japanese Protestant pastors and trained evangelists, and 331 Bible women. Among the 815 organized churches, 182 are wholly self-supporting. In addition to the 90,000 Protestant communicants, 67,000 Roman Catholic people, and

32,000 Greek Christians among the Japanese, it is estimated by Christian pastors that there are many hundreds of thousands of the people who are conducting their lives according to the principles and with the spirit of Jesus.

Furthermore, a careful study of modern Japanese civilization shows that the Christian conception of man as having intrinsic and inherent worth has been embodied in the constitution and laws of the land and is being put into wide practise. The rights of children, women, and inferiors and the duties of parents, husbands, and superiors are new notes in Japan, and are sounding forth a richer music than has ever before been heard in the Orient.

Of course there are still discordant notes, as we have seen when considering the subject of the buying and selling of geisha and prostitutes; but so there are even in so-called Christian lands. Nevertheless, the conception of the value of the individual and of his rights is inspiring a hope among the

lowly and hitherto downtrodden and oppressed sections of the nation which cannot be extinguished, and will in due time powerfully transform the traditional civilization, giving to woman a place of equality along with man in the estimation of all.

The general education of girls, and especially their higher education, is signal proof of a wide acceptance of Christian conceptions. According to the *Résumé Statistique* (1914), there were, in 1911-12, 250 girls' high schools, public and private, whose pupils numbered 64,809. In addition, the number of women in normal schools preparing to become elementary school-teachers was 8,271, and in the higher normal schools, 570. The number of female teachers is reported at 42,739. These girls' high and normal schools, through the ability they give their graduates to converse with men on a basis of intellectual equality in regard to topics of current interest while retaining their modesty and personal character, are so transforming the reticent habits and unsocial cus-

toms of Japanese ladies that ere long scant room will be left for the old-time geisha.

The change Christianity is silently bringing to the home life of Japan, adding to its sweetness, purity, and conscious unity, and contributing a mighty uplift to both head and heart, few as yet have either eyes to see or ears to hear. The influence already exerted by Christian ideas and ideals on the traditional conceptions of Japan in regard to home life, marriage, childhood, the poor and lowly, the orphan, the blind, the leper, and the diseased generally,—in a word on the value of the individual and his inalienable, God-given rights,—is so widespread and so beneficent that it receives little specific comment and no opposition.

There were no doubt in old Japan certain influences predisposing many to the new ideals and practises introduced from the West. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, at this stage in Japan's development to reckon accurately how much of Japan's new life is due to new factors introduced from Chris-

tendom, and how much to ideals already operative in the feudal system. No one can doubt, however, that Christian ideals have been the most important factors in the West to give woman her present status. Nor can we doubt that Christian ideals and practises are playing an important rôle in the modern emancipation of women in Japan.

Those who criticize missionaries as forcing the Christian religion upon unwilling peoples know not whereof they speak. The Christian faith would make no progress whatever in Japan were it not found by Japanese themselves to be ennobling and satisfying. It is welcomed because it brings hope and peace and power to those who were hopeless and restless and powerless.

But he is very shortsighted who thinks that the main forces Christianizing Japan are wielded by the foreign missionary. The missionary doubtless is an essential agent, but of far more importance is the work of Japanese Christians themselves; and in addition to these is the general though vague

influence exerted by Western civilization as a whole, and particularly by the English language and literature. In that important work, *Fifty Years of New Japan,* are many remarkable chapters, but especially noteworthy are those entitled "Social Changes of New Japan," and "Influence of the West upon Japan," from the pens of competent, wide-awake Japanese scholars.

Consider what Professor Nitobe says: "The greatest influence of the West is, after all, the spiritual. . . . Christianity has influenced the thought and lives of many individuals in Japan, and will influence many more, eventually affecting the nation through the altered view-point and personnel of the citizen and the administrator. The character-changing power of the religion of Jesus I believe to be only just now making itself appreciably evident in our midst." Somewhat further on, referring to the English language, he writes: "The effect of the acquisition of the English tongue on the mental habits—I had almost said on the uncon-

scious cerebrations of our people—is incalculable. . . . The moral influence of some of its simple text-books used in our schools cannot be overrated. . . . They have been instrumental in opening new vistas of thought and vast domains of enterprise and interest to young minds."

No student of Japan's new life, resulting from the influence of Western and Christian ideas and ideals, should fail to familiarize himself with the eighth issue (1910) of *The Christian Movement in Japan,* which gives a series of remarkable addresses delivered by Japanese and foreigners at the semicentennial celebration of the beginning of Protestant missions in Japan. Especial attention should be paid to the section treating of the "Influence of Christianity on Japanese Thought and Life."

It will be obvious to any thoughtful person that changes so wide and deep, affecting all the fundamental conceptions of life, of manhood and womanhood, of the state, of law and justice, of right and duty, are not con-

fined to those whose privilege it is to study Western books and acquire the higher education. In ten thousand ways the whole national life is being transformed, slowly it may be and silently, yet surely and steadily. And the benefits are accruing to the most lowly and least educated no less than to those at the top. All the working women of Japan have already received in some degree, and in the future will more and more receive, the blessings and the uplift which are coming to the nation through its contact with the Christian conceptions and standards embedded in Western civilization and literature.

A volume—nay, many volumes—would be needed to tell in detail the story of how the Christian message has been and is being conveyed to the people of Japan. We should make known the story of Joseph Hardy Neesima, of the Kumamoto Band, of Dr. Clark and Dr. Hepburn, of Young Men's Christian Association teachers of English in government schools, of faithful, self-sacrificing pastors, evangelists, Bible women, and

missionaries. We should recount the deeds of heroic lay Christians in all the walks of life, and above all in their homes, too often hostile, commending their new-found faith by their new spirit and life. We should tell of the work of Christian teachers of ethics in the prisons, and the remarkable results secured. We should relate the experiences of those who have struggled for the rights of prostitutes, of Salvation Army officers, of matrons of reform homes, of managers of ex-convicts' homes, of founders of orphan asylums, of supporters of private charity hospitals. We should tell the story of the scores of Christian institutions the central aim of which is to express in concrete life the Christian's faith and hope and love.

But in addition to the narrative of direct Christian work, full heed should be given to the evidences of the wide acceptance by the nation of the best Christian ideals in matters of philanthropy. To meet the needs of the famine sufferers in north Japan dur-

ing the winter and spring of 1914, and of those who were deprived of their all by the terrific volcanic explosion of the island of Sakurajima in January, 1914, more than a million yen ($500,000) of private gifts flowed into the hands of the relieving committees. For the earthquake sufferers the Diet voted 622,883 yen ($311,441).

The late Emperor, shortly before his death, was so moved by the medical needs of the poor that he contributed a fund of a million yen for the systematic undertaking of medical work in all parts of Japan. This started a movement among the wealthy which has resulted in the establishment of a Medical Relief Association (Saiseikwai), having a fund of $5,000,000 already paid in and pledges for $8,000,000 more.

Men of wealth in Japan are following the example set by the best Christian life in the West. In recent years several large gifts have been made for education. At the close of 1913 one of the most wealthy and always generous families of Japan, Sumitomo

of Osaka, announced their decision to establish an industrial school for the poor, at an expense of $200,000. And in the same year Mr. O'Hara, one of the wealthiest and most philanthropic men of Okayama, announced his plan of opening a high-grade agricultural school for poor boys of that prefecture. The amount of the gift is not stated, but in addition to the large sum needed for buildings and equipment, he donates as permanent endowment some 250 acres of rice land whose value, roughly estimated, may be about $50,000.

There are in Japan of all denominations and religions the following institutions for the uplift and regeneration of the downtrodden and for the help of the poor:

| | |
|---|---|
| Orphan asylums | 100 |
| Rescue work | 92 |
| Dispensaries | 45 |
| Reformatories | 47 |
| Homes for ex-prisoners | 37 |
| Homes for old people | 22 |
| Poor farms | 11 |
| | 354 |

Of these institutions, the compiler of the statistics states that for one Shinto and three Buddhist, there are five Christian institutions. The leaders and inspirers in all the forms of philanthropic work are Christians, as from the nature of the case might be expected.

"In the matter of Christian Social Service," writes A. D. Hail, in the *Japan Evangelist*,[1] "the Federated Missions have been represented by two Committees whose fields of endeavor are quite distinct. The one is the excellent Eleemosynary Committee. It deals with the delinquents, defectives, and dependents of society. . . .

"The Industrial Welfare Committee seeks to Christianize the industrial classes, and to encourage the development of dealing upon Christian principles with the complicated questions growing out of the relations of capital and labor. By the industrial classes we mean the non-capitalistic laborers and bread-winners. It includes men, women,

[1] January, 1915.

and many thousands of children. They do not own the machinery they handle, and have no voice in the control of the industries with which they are connected. Being without any say in the control of factories, machines, and raw material, they can be discharged at any moment by employers for reasons satisfactory alone to themselves. Their bodies, their minds, and oftentime their morals, become subservient to foremen and managers. The unskilled laborers in particular have no margin of either wages or time for wholesome recreations, for accidents, old age, widowhood, and unemployment. Besides these there is another large class in Japan, of small traders who rent their shops and eke out earnings by the sweating process, or by renting rooms for doubtful purposes. To these are to be added fishermen who do not own tackle, tenant farmers and their employees, and the main body of school-teachers; also an army engaged in transportation, together with postal clerks, postmen, and others. Incidental to this are the districts

of large cities and mining camps, where there are congested populations of unskilled laborers subjected to diseases occasioned by bad drainage, inadequate housing, and all the consequent evils. As these do not earn sufficient wages to entitle them to vote, they have no voice whatever in the betterment of their surroundings. . . .

"There is a growing tendency toward the fixedness of a gulf between laborers and their employers, so much so that Japan's great danger in this direction is that she may fail to realize that she has a labor problem on hand, and one that can be solved here, as elsewhere, only on the basis of Christian principles of common fair dealing."

In spite, however, of abundant evidence that Christian ethical and philanthropic ideals are receiving wide acceptance in Japan, far wider than would be suggested by the statistics of membership in the Christian churches, it is also true that the evils of Occidental industrialism and materialism are sweeping in like a flood.

Turning now from general statements as to the ethico-industrial conditions of the working women of Japan, in the next chapter I give the story of a single institution.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MATSUYAMA WORKING GIRLS' HOME

THE origin and history of the Matsuyama Working Girls' Home cannot be told apart from the story of the man who has been its heart and life, Mr. Shinjiro Omoto. Born in 1872 and graduating from the common school at fourteen, he at once went into business, first as an apprentice and later with his father. At nineteen he opened a sugar store, which flourished and before long overshadowed the father's business. Money came in so easily that he soon entered on a life of licentiousness, and for several years he was as famous for his drunken carousals as he had been for his phenomenal business success. His parents cut him off, refused him admittance to the house, and for years he did not even speak to his father.

In 1899, we held a preaching service in a theater. Mr. Omoto happened to be drinking in the saloon opposite. Hearing of our gathering, with some rowdy comrades, he thought he would break it up, with the result that we experienced persistent opposition throughout the meeting. But the sermons on Pessimism and the New Life, and my statement of the reasons that had brought me to Japan attracted his attention, and the next day I received an anonymous letter asking for tracts. These seem to have produced a profound impression, particularly the tract entitled "Two Young Men." It told of two hardened prisoners who had been transformed by the gospel and became highly useful and well-known members of society. Mr. Omoto thereupon set himself definitely to learn about Christianity, but privately, unwilling to make public his new hope. He bought and read through, quite by himself, the entire New Testament. Though he gained some idea of the gospel, he soon found he had lost none of his passion for drink.

After a while he went to Kobe and joined a temperance society; but soon finding that the society had members who broke their pledges, he began to break his. In despair he went to Okayama and tried to join himself to Mr. Ishii, head of the well-known Christian orphanage, asking to be made a Christian, but he was told to return to Matsuyama and join the church there in his old home; only so could he be saved. Greatly disappointed, he returned and called on me early in June, 1901, but without telling fully about himself. He also called on Mr. Nishimura, an earnest Christian worker, who prayed with him, telling him that to be saved he must receive the Holy Spirit.

That summer, quite exceptionally, I returned in the middle of the vacation. Mr. Omoto appeared at the prayer-meeting for the first time and was evidently in a state of great excitement, so much so that only with difficulty could we understand his remarks and his prayer. The gist was that he had that day received the Holy Spirit,

that he was now saved, and that his joy was too great for utterance. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he talked and prayed. After the meeting I had a few words with him, and urged him to ally himself with our experienced workers. He was so excited that I feared for him, and wondered whether this might not be a tornado of emotion due to drink and to the nervous condition incident to his riotous life, an emotion which he mistook for the gift of the Holy Spirit. I urged him to begin at once to live the Christian life, cutting loose from all bad companions and bad habits.

To gain an honest living he entered the Matsuyama Cotton Thread Spinning Factory. This required twelve hours of work daily, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, a hard pull for one who had done no steady work for years. He attended Christian services faithfully, so far as his hours of work allowed, and became quite intimate with two or three of our best Christians. Before long he began to talk about the wretched

conditions and immoral life of the factory girls, telling us of the situation already described in Chapter IX.[1] His first thought was to give these tired children wholesome recreation. He secured the use of our preaching place in the vicinity of the factory and invited the girls to attend what he called the Dojokwai (Sympathy Society). He soon persuaded the girls to add a little reading and writing to their play, and later also, sewing. These meetings had of course to be held after the twelve or more hours of work in the factory had been completed. Care had also to be taken that the studies and the fun should not absorb time needed for sleep. Membership in the Sympathy Society rose rapidly and soon numbered seventy girls.

At first meetings were held only in the evening three times a week, and lasted but an hour. But as the educational element of the society developed, others were induced to help and every evening save Sunday was

[1] See pages 67–69.

occupied. In order that girls on the night shift might continue their studies similar classes were also held from seven to nine o'clock in the morning. Before six months had passed the play aspect of the society was largely superseded by the educational.

But opposition of Buddhists now began to show itself. A few parents refused to let their girls attend. The most determined opposition however came from the manager in the factory who had charge of one of the shifts. Members of that shift were so treated that gradually they dropped out of the Dojokwai, and new members from that shift could not be secured. The hostile manager was however himself dropped some months later, and all opposition to the work from within the factory ceased.

In a previous chapter we have noted the facts discovered by Mr. Omoto as he went the rounds of the boarding-houses in which the girls were required to live.[1] As these conditions became clearer and more appall-

[1] See pages 68, 69.

ingly impressive, he began to say with increasing frequency and insistence that the Sympathy Society, however successful, could not do what was needed. Only a Christian home would answer. Not only do the girls need to learn to read and write and sew, but even more than these do they need a home free from temptation, clean and pure and helpful, and elevating morally and religiously. The difficulties however in the way of such an enterprise seemed insuperable. To say nothing of the financial problem, a still greater obstacle, it was felt, was the securing of "recognition" from the factory, for Buddhist influence in the factory was at that time still dominant. During these months the Sympathy Society was winning its way among the girls and their parents, and Mr. Omoto himself was learning valuable lessons.

One was that the girls were not all eager to be in a Christian home. We of course forbade all drinking, irregular hours, and more irregular "friendships." Attendance

on prayers, night and morning, and at the school, was required. It looked for a time as if we should fail, for lack of girls to meet the expenses.

But in spite of discouragements we kept on. The earnings of the girls who lived in the home, for the first year, were 1,361 yen. Of this sum they paid for board 905 yen, and sent to their parents 456, whereas girls in the other boarding-houses were able to save nothing, although the amount paid for board was the same in all the houses, being fixed by the factory at 3.60 yen per month, or twelve sen (six cents) per day.

In February, 1903, a representative of the government who came from Tokyo to inspect the conditions of labor in western Japan, heard of the Dojokwai (Sympathy Home), and was so much interested in the story of its work that he took time to visit it with several local officials. He was greatly pleased, for he knew of nothing just like this, in any other part of Japan, particularly in its hygienic, educational, and moral ad-

vantages, and he expressed the wish that there might be many such. This was our first notice from government officials.

As time went on, Mr. Omoto was found by the factory officials to be exceptionally faithful to its interests; he was rapidly promoted from one position to another, and in December of the same year was made "visitor" and "employing agent." This required him to visit neighboring towns and villages and collect new girls when needed. He tried to decline this work, saying that he could make no false promises to the girls or to their parents, nor in any way delude them as to the nature of their work, the amount of their wages, the conditions of the boarding-houses; being strictly a temperance man, also, he could not treat with sake (sah'-ke) and so get into friendly relations, all of which things employing agents constantly do; he had no expectations of gaining any recruits; the factory would better send some one else. They told him at least to try. To the surprise of all, and of him-

self the most, from his first trip he brought back with him fifteen girls. For three years he continued in this work and was always successful in securing girls for the factory. Because of his refusal to touch liquor in any form, his traveling expenses were much less than those of other employing agents, much to the satisfaction of the management; and the girls he secured on the whole remained longer and more contentedly at work, because he had always told them the truth. This made his position in the factory more secure and influential. After about two years' employment by the day he was promoted to the rank of a regular employee and paid by the month. His hours of official service were also largely reduced in order that he might have time for his educational and Christian work in the Home—a striking testimony of appreciation on the part of the factory officials.

As the months passed by it gradually became clear that the effectiveness as well as the permanence of the work demanded suit-

able quarters. The heavy rental paid for the house made self-support impossible. Results already attained seemed to warrant appeal to friends for gifts, for the purpose of buying land and the erection of a building. Responses to our appeals provided the needed funds, land was purchased and a contract made with a carpenter on exceptionally favorable terms, just two days before the opening of the Russo-Japanese war (February, 1904). Immediately prices went up by leaps and bounds; but our contract was so well made and the carpenter had already made such full subcontracts for the lumber, etc., that we were not troubled because of war prices.

As we entered our new quarters in June, 1904, however, the factory shut down the main part of its work and discharged the majority of its workers. This was a severe blow to the Home. The occupants were reduced to seven girls. Although the factory opened again after a few months, the conditions during and after the war made it

difficult for the factory to secure girls, and the Home, together with the other boarding-houses, suffered from lack of boarders. Beginning with March, 1907, however, special circumstances combined to fill the Home to its utmost capacity; during the three months of April, May, and June thirty applicants were refused admittance and as many more who desired to enter the school were declined.

Increasing acquaintance with the disastrous effects of factory labor,—the lint-filled air so often producing consumption, and the excessive heat of summer sometimes resulting even in sunstroke,—made Mr. Omoto unwilling to persuade girls to enter upon such a life. The needs of the Home also pressed upon his time. These considerations led him, in 1906, to give up his work in the factory altogether, in order to devote his entire time and strength to the Home and to the upbuilding of the moral and religious life of the girls.

In July, 1906, Mr. Omoto attended in

Osaka the first convention of factory officials convened to study the problem of the proper care of operatives. Representatives were present from sixteen factories having night schools, and specimens of the work of the girls were compared. Mr. Omoto was fairly lionized because of the superior quality of the work sent in from our Home and many newspapers made special mention of him and his work.

In September, 1908, there was held in Tokyo under the auspices of the Home Department of the Imperial government an eight weeks' school of applied sociology. Mr. Omoto was among the 376 persons who attended. Again he received exceptional attention and was asked to tell his story. At this school no less than thirty-six learned specialists gave lectures on every conceivable topic suitable for such a school. Among the speakers so many were professed Christians, and of the rest so many advocated such markedly Christian ideals, that some Buddhists are said to have taken offense, re-

garding the whole affair as a part of the Christian propaganda.

In the spring of 1909 there occurred an event of considerable significance. Without a preliminary hint of what was happening, Mr. Omoto saw in the paper one day the amazing statement that the Matsuyama Working Girls' Home, along with seventy-nine other selected institutions throughout the country, was the recipient of a specified sum (200 yen) as a mark of government approval! A total of 40,000 yen were thus distributed in varying amounts, Christian institutions being recognized to an unexpected degree. Later, word came from the Prefectural Office summoning him to receive the gift. In the entire prefecture six institutions had been thus honored, and of these, two were Christian. This gift from the Department of the Interior has been repeated each year since.

Again in May, 1910, a Conference of Social Service Workers (Chu-o Jizen Kyokwai) was held at Nagoya at the time of the

Exposition, and Mr. Omoto was among those invited to attend. His address and statistical report received much attention. Mr. Tomeoka, representative of the government and chairman of the conference, spoke in unstinted praise of the work of the Home, which he characterized as "Kokka Jigyo" (a national enterprise), and recommended the adoption by others of several of its special features.

In the spring of 1911, the Home Department of the central government published a small volume describing one hundred and thirteen model philanthropic institutions of the country, in which we were of course pleased to see that the Home was included, being the only one from the prefecture.

As opportunity offered and means were available, following the advice of friends, four small adjacent lots were purchased, one of which we were almost forced to secure for self-protection, because of the evil character of the buildings upon it. We now own altogether about two acres of land on

the north side of the beautiful Castle Hill, around which Matsuyama is built. Here have been erected at different times six buildings (three of them two-storied), for residential, dormitory, chapel, night school, weaving, hospital, bath, and other purposes. We have space for a playground, of which the girls joyously avail themselves, after returning from twelve hours of confinement in the dust and clatter of machinery. The garden, too, provides fresh vegetables of an assured character at a minimum of expense, adding much to the variety and the wholesomeness of the diet. The present value of the property is more than its original cost, for land and buildings are constantly rising in price, as is the case in other parts of the country.

The city educational authorities in 1906 asked Mr. Omoto to open his night school to the poor of the district. For this he had to have a regular school license from the National Bureau of Education at Tokyo. This was to be a Christian school—the only

license of exactly that kind in the empire, he was told.

Industrial newspapers have been noticing the Home and its work for some time.[1] During the past five years the favorable attitude of local and national government officials has been particularly pronounced. Government inspectors have repeatedly been sent from the Prefectural Office and occasionally even from Tokyo to visit the Home. One such expressed himself as amazed at the excellent mental work done by the girls, in view of the fact that all their study takes place after twelve hours of toil. Nothing but good food, sufficient sleep, and a wholesome and happy home life could account for their splendid health and superior school work. One man remarked that the girls in the Home do better work than pupils in the same grade in public schools.

Even so early as the autumn of 1906 the Home Department of the central government sent down special instructions to the pre-

[1] See page 149.

fectural office in Matsuyama to investigate our work, with the result that of nine benevolent institutions throughout Japan selected for commendation, ours was the one most carefully described and unqualifiedly praised. A recent government pamphlet concerning industrial problems makes special reference, covering two pages, to the work of the Home. Thus has a small institution begun to serve as a model for the country.

The good health of the girls in our Home has been in strong contrast with the health of those in other boarding-houses, even in the best dormitories of the best factories in other cities.

Statistics recently compiled by the government show that the average death-rate among factory operatives throughout the country is extraordinarily high. The highest, fifty per cent. on account of an epidemic, was reported from a certain factory owned and managed boarding-house in Niigata prefecture. Not one girl has ever died in our Home. Of the 301 girls who had lived in

our Home by 1911, only eight, all told, died.

In 1912 the Home passed through a crisis that threatened to destroy it. Late in 1911 the one factory in Matsuyama, where all the girls worked, was sold out to parties living in Osaka. A new manager was sent down who introduced many drastic changes. The change most affecting us was the stopping of the night work and the lengthening of day work to fourteen hours: namely, from 6 A.M. till 8 P.M.

The girls in the Home soon became dissatisfied, and not many months passed before all had left the factory. Mr. Omoto was urged by the manager to find and bring in new girls. He refused however on the ground that he could not ask anybody to work such brutally long hours.

Had it not been for a little weaving department with which we had already been experimenting, the Home would have been compelled to close. More looms were secured and those girls who wished to remain

with us were given opportunity for work. Mr. Omoto's attention was at that time directed to the condition of the weaving girls in the scores and even hundreds of little establishments in the city and its suburbs. He soon found that an educational, economic, moral, and religious condition existed among them not unlike that which he had found among the factory girls of Matsuyama a dozen years before. The weaving establishments are, as a rule, small private affairs, usually having less than ten girls each, and are therefore wholly outside of the supervision of the government. The treatment of workers and the hours of labor are entirely settled by the individual owners.

As a rule the girls are apprenticed for from two to three years immediately on leaving the primary school, at an age therefore of twelve or thirteen. They barely earn their living, although they work from daybreak to ten or eleven at night, and in some establishments even till midnight—from fifteen to eighteen hours a day! There are

MATSUYAMA WORKING GIRLS' HOME

GIRLS IN THE MATSUYAMA HOME

no night shifts and rare holidays on occasional festivals. The hygienic and moral conditions are about as bad as can be. It is estimated that one half of the girls are ruined before the close of their apprenticeship. Our Home is now deliberately attacking the new problem, which in many respects is more difficult than was the old one. We have put up two small buildings on our own grounds, enabling us to have thirty looms to give opportunity for work to thirty girls.

The uniform quality of the cloth produced by our girls, the central portions of each piece equaling the ends in quality, shows unflagging moral attention, without effort to rush the work and stint the material; this has already won such approval from merchants that the "Sympathy Home" brand can be sold for a little more than other brands, and Mr. Omoto is assured that there is no limit to the amount which could be marketed.

An owner of several weaving establishments has become so impressed with the qual-

ity of the work and the character developed in our girls that he asked Mr. Omoto if he would not take charge of a hundred of his weaving girls. This new departure is especially promising, for we have complete supervision of the girls throughout the entire twenty-four hours. The girls, moreover, are already remaining in our Home as a rule much longer than they used to when getting work in the spinning factory.

As successive chapters of this book have shown, no more urgent problem faces New Japan than that of the moral development of her workers. This is particularly true of the hundreds of thousands of girls in the larger and smaller factories and industrial establishments. The wretched physical, economic, social, and moral conditions under which the majority of these girls lived and worked at the time when our Home was started are not easily described.

Many of the factory authorities[1] are

[1] It is not to be inferred from the statements in this book that the political leaders and the organizers of industrial Japan

neither ignorant nor unmindful of the situation, and are striving to remedy it. The government also has enacted laws not a few. But laws and official actions alone provide no adequate solution of the serious problems raised by the extraordinary industrial and social transformations sweeping over Japan. A new spirit must be evoked, both on the part of capital and labor, and new moral ideals and relations established. This cannot be done by laws alone. Only love and contagious personal example are sufficient for the needs.

Our Home was designed to meet just such a situation and has to a remarkable degree, we think, succeeded. It has provided not only sufficient fresh air, nourishing food, adequate bedding, clean rooms, and wholesome recreation, but also moral and reli-

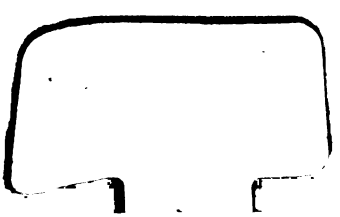
have been dependent on our Home for ideas and ideals in regard to the problems raised by modern industry. Many of those leaders are men of cosmopolitan education and are well versed in the best and most recent literature of the West on these matters. It is true, however, that our Home has been an important concrete experiment affording in Japan valuable suggestions and stimulus.

gious instruction, and some education. The girls in our Home have enjoyed conspicuously better health and have done better work and earned and sent to their parents more money than those of the other boarding-houses of Matsuyama. But better than these have been the educational, moral, and religious results. Their womanhood has been raised. They have been better fitted for life's duties and for motherhood than they would have been without the training which has been given them.

Moreover, the results of the Home have been such as to break down opposition. The good-will and cooperation of the factory officials were won. Factories in other parts of the country also have recognized our Home as presenting a splendid ideal which, in a measure, many of them are already following. The local and the central governments, as already shown, have repeatedly sent officials to inspect us, and in their reports have not only praised us, but have described our Home in detail, saying that we have

solved the difficult problem of how to care for factory hands.

Through the Home we are reaching the lowest strata of the working classes of Japan, and are providing them with ideals, motives, and education, and in a way, too, which does not tend to pauperize them, for each girl pays as board a sum sufficient to cover actual living expenses. It is also exerting an influence on the townsfolk. The attitude of the people toward Christianity has undergone a marked change. Villages in the interior likewise have altered their attitude on seeing how their daughters, graduates of our Home, have improved both in intelligence and character, in marked contrast to those who have been in other boarding-houses. All in all, Mr. Omoto has attained remarkable success. He is absorbed, heart and soul, in his work of bettering the moral and religious conditions of the working girls of Japan, and is a man continuously growing in spiritual life, Christian character, and knowledge of men. I have never known a

man more thoroughly converted or more enthusiastic in his chosen field of work. The Omoto of to-day is a different person from the reformed debauchee of thirteen years ago, who began this service for factory girls as the outcome of his sincere question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His family have become possessed with the idea of social service, and his five children are being brought up in this atmosphere and in the fear of the Lord.

Thus has the Matsuyama Working Girls' Home survived many threatening vicissitudes, attained conspicuous successes, and is now embarked on a new line of endeavor. May it exceed in the future its successes of the past and make still more substantial contributions to the uplift of the working women of Japan!